

## RESTRICTIVE CONSEQUENTIALISM AND REAL FRIENDSHIP

*Edmund Henden*

### *Abstract*

A familiar objection to restrictive consequentialism is that a restrictive consequentialist is incapable of having true friendships. In this paper I distinguish between an instrumentalist and a non-instrumentalist version of this objection and argue that while the restrictive consequentialist can answer the non-instrumentalist version, restrictive consequentialism may still seem vulnerable to the instrumentalist version. I then suggest a consequentialist reply that I argue also works against this version of the objection. Central to this reply is the claim that a restrictive consequentialist is capable of true friendship if the value she aims for is not merely seen as a function of her self-regarding desires, but includes as a central constituent a form of objective value often referred to as ‘flourishing’ or ‘self-realization’.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

Although there may not be any agreement about the precise definition of consequentialism, one common view is that it can be characterized by three standard assumptions: (1) the right option in any decision is the option that maximizes objectively probable value, (2) probable value is ‘impersonal’ or ‘agent-neutral’ value, that is, value that is such that everyone has reason to promote it, (3) the criterion of maximizing probable value serves at once to evaluate options and to choose them. A familiar objection to standard consequentialism is what has been called ‘the nasty utility-eker objection’.<sup>2</sup> According to this objection, the standard consequentialist cannot be a good person because she always tries

<sup>1</sup> Earlier versions of this paper have been presented to the Ethics Reading Group at Columbia University and to the Department Colloquia at the University of Oslo. I thank the audiences on both occasions for helpful comments.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g., Michael Slote, *Beyond Optimizing* (Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 41–43. Byron has coined the phrase ‘the nasty utility-eker objection’. See Michael Byron, ‘Satisficing and Optimality’, *Ethics* 109 (October 1998), p. 91.

to 'eke out the most or best she can in every situation'.<sup>3</sup> An example that is often used to support this claim is that a standard consequentialist will be incapable of having true friendships. This follows, it is argued, because she will terminate her friendships if sustaining them no longer maximizes probable value, and because irreplaceability, or knowing that one is cared about and loved as an end, is a necessary part of any true friendship. The result is that the standard consequentialist will *alienate her friends*, who will fear that she will drop them at any time, as well as *alienate herself* from her friends, because she will find it difficult to be committed to any of her own friendships.

One consequentialist response to this objection has been to lift the third assumption above and go 'restrictive'.<sup>4</sup> Restrictive consequentialism is the view that although it is appropriate to evaluate options by the criterion of maximizing probable value, it is sometimes permissible to restrict maximization in some area of action and rely rather on some other criterion of choice.<sup>5</sup> The idea is, very briefly, that agents have a choice, not only between performing various actions, but also between encouraging various traits, motives or policies. For example, an agent may find that she has a *pro-friendship predisposition*.<sup>6</sup> Such an agent may be concerned with whether or not she ought to preserve this predisposition. If she makes a decision in favour of keeping it, she must accept that the actions which manifest that predisposition will not be chosen on a maximizing basis since it would be self-defeating to decide whether to sustain a friendship by constantly weighing up the

<sup>3</sup> Slote, *Beyond Optimizing*, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> This is not the only possible consequentialist response. Another would be to lift the second assumption. See for example Amartya Sen, 'Rights and Agency', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 11 (1982). I will not discuss this strategy here.

<sup>5</sup> This is a familiar view in the literature on consequentialism. The version I am focusing on in this paper can be found in Philip Pettit and Geoffrey Brennan, 'Restrictive Consequentialism', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (December 1986), pp. 438–55. Other versions include: Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 24–29, pp. 31–45 and pp. 98–100; David Brink, 'Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View', *Journal of Philosophy* 83 (1986), pp. 417–38; Peter Railton, 'Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality', in S. Scheffler (ed), *Consequentialism and Its Critics* (Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 93–133; James Griffin, 'The Human Good and Ambitions of Consequentialism', *Social Philosophy and Policy* 9 (1992), pp. 118–32.

<sup>6</sup> By the term 'predisposition' I shall mean a psychological state whose manifestation in action means that the action is not chosen on a fully calculative basis. Predispositions in this sense should be distinguished from ordinary dispositions such as beliefs and desires since one may encourage the latter states in oneself without thereby forswearing maximizing calculation over the choice of any actions. See Pettit and Brennan, 'Restrictive Consequentialism', p. 440.

costs for oneself in terms of probable value. This view is consequentialist because it holds that for it to be permissible to forswear maximizing calculation in this way, the predisposition must be associated with some rewarding consequence that could not have been attained under a calculative choice of action. In the case of friendship, these rewarding consequences will include values such as trust and loyalty, as well as mutual pleasure and happiness.

Many authors have argued that 'going restrictive' does not save consequentialism from the nasty utility-eker objection. In this paper I distinguish between an instrumentalist and a non-instrumentalist version of this objection and argue that while the restrictive consequentialist can answer the non-instrumentalist version, restrictive consequentialism may still seem vulnerable to the instrumentalist version. I then suggest a consequentialist reply that I argue also will work against this version of the objection. Central to this reply is the claim that having an instrumental motivational structure only leads to alienation given a certain view of *the value* the consequentialist aims for. If this value is not merely seen as a function of her self-regarding desires, but includes as a central constituent a form of 'flourishing' or 'self-realization', the restriction of maximizing calculation can be grounded within a virtue-based approach in a way that need not be inconsistent with a broadly consequentialist framework. I argue that if this strategy can be made to work, it may provide a plausible answer to the nasty utility-eker objection.

## 2. The nasty utility-eker objection

According to the nasty utility-eker objection, standard consequentialists are incapable of having true friendships because they go around calculating probable value all the time. Nothing is changed if the standard consequentialist goes restrictive; restrictive consequentialists will still be incapable of having true friendships. We can distinguish between two versions of this objection. On *the instrumentalist version*, the trouble is that the restrictive consequentialist will have an instrumental motivational structure that is incompatible with the norms of friendship. Even if her individual acts may be motivated by a deeply felt care and interest towards her friends rather than by maximizing calculation, she still pursues her friendships only because she has a reason to

believe that preserving or adopting a pro-friendship predisposition is a means to maximal value. She is, therefore, acting in the service of a maximizing goal; she regards her friendship as dependent for its worth on overall value and thus as sacrificeable to it. If the friend knows that the restrictive consequentialist is acting in the service of that goal, he will have reason to suspect that she also will be prepared to act in the service of it whenever she believes that betraying the friendship will serve it. But that is incompatible with the norms of friendship. Friendship, on this view, depends for its existence on the friends caring about each other for their own sakes and not merely as a useful means to some independent end.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the instrumentalist version, the nasty utility-eker objection also comes in a *non-instrumentalist version*.<sup>8</sup> On this version, even if the restrictive consequentialist may not have maximization of value as her purpose or motive in performing any individual act, it still functions as a governing condition on her predispositions. Thus, just as we will tend to adjust our linguistic behavior so that it conforms with 'the regulative ideal' of grammar for our language, so she will adjust her conduct so that it conforms or at least does not conflict with 'the regulative ideal' of value maximization.<sup>9</sup> But this, it is argued, is incompatible with the norms of friendship. The reason is this: what defines the value and nature of a relationship is not simply a matter of what motivates the agent on a day-to-day basis, but under what conditions the agent would accept and terminate the relationship. For a restrictive consequentialist, these acceptance and terminating conditions will be shaped by her regulative ideal, which is maximization

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Neera Badhwar Kapur, 'Why It Is Wrong to Be Always Guided by the Best: Consequentialism and Friendship', *Ethics* 101 (April 1991), pp. 483–504; Christine Swanton, 'Virtue Ethics and Satisficing Rationality', in D. Statman (ed), *Virtue Ethics. A Critical Reader* (Edinburgh University Press, 1997), pp. 82–99; Michael Byron, 'Consequentialist Friendship and Quasi-instrumental Goods', *Utilitas* Vol.14, No. 2 (July 2002), pp. 249–57.

<sup>8</sup> For this version, see Dean Cocking and Justin Oakley, 'Indirect Consequentialism, Friendship, and the Problem of Alienation', *Ethics* 106 (1995), pp. 86–111.

<sup>9</sup> The idea that value maximization operates in the agent's psyche as 'a regulative ideal' is meant to capture Railton's description of the restrictive consequentialist (or in his terminology, *sophisticated consequentialist*) as someone whose motivational structure is guided by a concern to meet a counterfactual condition: 'while he ordinarily does not do what he does simply for the sake of doing what is right, he would nevertheless alter his dispositions and the course of his life if he thought they did not most promote the good'. See Railton, 'Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality', p. 111; Cocking and Oakley, 'Indirect Consequentialism, Friendship, and the Problem of Alienation', p. 89.

of value. Thus, she will engage in a particular relationship of friendship only if it maximizes value, and end it if it fails to do so. In other words, her attitude will be conditional on whether the relationship *as a whole* maximizes overall value. But this is incompatible with the motivational dispositions proper to genuine friendship. Her friends will have no reason to trust her since they know that they might be dropped whenever the relationship is perceived to be non-optimal in terms of agent-neutral value. In fact, with respect to the acceptance and terminating conditions of relationships, there are no significant differences between the restrictive and standard consequentialist: both will be disposed to engage in and cease their relationships with their 'friends' under exactly the same conditions. The point can be brought out by an analogy: a doctor may be moved by particularistic care and concern for her patient. Still, since her attitude will be conditional on whether the patient is in need of medical care or not, the relationship will not be one of friendship. This follows since it is not part of the norms of friendship that one engages in the relationship to provide a certain form of care and ceases it when such care is no longer needed. The acceptance and terminating conditions of a doctor-patient relationship is very different from the acceptance and terminating conditions of a true friendship.<sup>10</sup>

Even if these two versions of the objection are similar, they must be distinguished. While the instrumental version locates the source of the problem in the consequentialist agent's motivational structure, the non-instrumental version locates it in the nature of her relationships. A plausible assumption may be that it is the former fact about her motivational structure that ultimately explains the latter fact about the nature of her relationships. Still, an adequate consequentialist reply to the instrumental version need not be an adequate reply to the non-instrumental version and *vice versa*. An adequate defense of consequentialism need, therefore, address both versions of the objection.

In my view, it is the instrumentalist version of the objection that poses the greatest threat to restrictive consequentialism. The trouble with the non-instrumental version is that while it *does* seem correct that the circumstances which would make having a pro-friendship predisposition non-optimal from the restrictive

<sup>10</sup> Cocking and Oakley, 'Indirect Consequentialism, Friendship, and the Problem of Alienation', p. 92.

consequentialist's point of view also would make her particular friendships non-optimal, the opposite does not seem to be the case. Thus, all sorts of circumstances could be imagined to make a *particular friendship* non-optimal from the restrictive consequentialist's point of view: her friend may go through a rough time so he loses the virtues that initially motivated her friendship with him, or perhaps other important commitments make it difficult for her to participate in the kind of shared activities that are necessary for sustaining the friendship. However, the restrictive consequentialist's actions towards her friend are not guided by a concern to maximize overall value, and although the circumstances in question make the particular friendship non-optimal, it is hard to see why they should make having a *pro-friendship predisposition* non-optimal. Abandoning the latter would mean abandoning all her friendships, in fact a whole way of life, and it seems reasonable to assume that only very dramatic events would make that the optimal option.<sup>11</sup> So, even if the restrictive consequentialist has maximization of overall value as an acceptance and terminating condition upon her pro-friendship predisposition, it is difficult to see why it should follow that it also operates as an acceptance and terminating condition upon her particular friendships. Thus, it is open to the restrictive consequentialist to reply to the non-instrumental version of the objection that her pro-friendship predisposition has a stability that should make her friends not fear that they will be cast off should their friendships become non-optimal from her point of view.

<sup>11</sup> Elinor Mason, who has suggested a similar line of reply to the non-instrumental objection, illustrates what sort of dramatic circumstances this could be in the case of a person who contracts a disease which makes him aggressive, violent and a pathological liar. Since the disease is progressive and incurable he decides, in a moment of lucidity, to abandon his pro-friendship predisposition and breaks off with all his friends. However, under such extreme circumstances, she claims, his friends would hardly feel replaced and alienated by his actions. See Elinor Mason, 'Can an Indirect Consequentialist Be a Real Friend?', *Ethics*, 108 (1998), p. 392. I think Mason is correct to point out that a pro-friendship predisposition would tend to be very stable in as much as only extreme events could dislodge it. It follows that the non-instrumental objection is wrong to claim that the restrictive consequentialist would terminate her particular friendships if they become non-optimal from her perspective. Even so, Mason overlooks the possibility that there may be less extreme circumstances in which the restrictive consequentialist could be prepared, if not to *abandon* her pro-friendship predisposition, at least to *replace* it with a more narrowly defined predisposition, i.e., one that would include only a *certain type* of friendship (see Byron, 'Consequentialist Friendship and Quasi-instrumental Goods', p. 253 for a similar point). In section three below I suggest an example of the latter where the consequentialist's friends *would have* reason to feel alienated by the consequentialist's actions.

Although this reply diminishes the force of the non-instrumentalist version of the objection, restrictive consequentialism still seems vulnerable to the instrumentalist version. According to the instrumentalist version, it is not the actual risk of termination and replacement that makes restrictive consequentialism incompatible with friendship. In fact, it may well be correct that this risk is very small since only very unusual circumstances would make the restrictive consequentialist abandon her pro-friendship predisposition. Furthermore, we may suppose that she, as a matter of fact, is not motivated to discover any other predisposition, or given her particular psychological constitution, even could adopt no other predisposition. Still, assuming restrictive consequentialism, it would be the case that *if* she believed that adopting some other (incompatible) predisposition maximized more overall value, she *ought to* adopt it instead. Thus, even if she thinks she values her friends as intrinsic goods, she should be prepared to sacrifice them under some circumstances. This follows since having a pro-friendship predisposition is only instrumentally valuable for her according to restrictive consequentialism: it is valuable *in so far* as it contributes to the maximization of agent-neutral value. Independent of her actual motivations, therefore, she will treat her friends *as if* she valued them as merely instrumental goods.<sup>12</sup> But knowing this, her friends would feel alienated from her.

The discussion so far suggests, I think, that an adequate reply to the instrumental version of the nasty utility-eker objection must meet three conditions. First, it must explain why the restrictive consequentialist would not be motivated to abandon her pro-friendship predisposition. Second, it must explain why she ought not adopt some other, incompatible predisposition. Third, it must explain why the way in which she values her particular friendships does not give her friends reason to feel alienated. In the next section I want to suggest a consequentialist reply that I argue meets these conditions.

### 3. Real consequentialist friendships

The consequentialist agent maximizes probable value either directly or indirectly. Let us assume that it is the evaluation of her

<sup>12</sup> This argument is due to Byron. See Byron, 'Consequentialist Friendship and Quasi-instrumental Goods'.



options in terms of goodness that yields her preference-ordering, whether or not that preference-ordering can be represented by a real-valued utility function.<sup>13</sup> Very broadly we can distinguish between subjective and objective conceptions of goodness. What I now want to argue is that while it may seem plausible that restrictive consequentialism based on a certain form of subjective conception of goodness is vulnerable to the nasty utility-eker objection, it is much less plausible that a version of this view based on an objective conception is similarly vulnerable. In particular, I want to suggest a specific form of objective conception which, combined with restrictive consequentialism, may seem to escape the objection altogether. Before I get to this form of objective conception, however, let me briefly repeat what I believe is at the heart of the instrumental version of the nasty utility-eker objection. That is the assumption that the notion of a pro-friendship predisposition as a means to some further end, entails that it *ought to be replaced* if it becomes non-optimal from the restrictive consequentialist's point of view. It is the idea of replaceability, claimed to be central to restrictive consequentialism, that creates alienation because it undermines the trust, loyalty and integrity of friendship. It is important to note that the replaceability in question need not be perceived to be a realistic psychological possibility. It is sufficient that it operates in the consequentialist's psyche as a kind of structural constraint on her reasoning.

What is common to subjective conceptions of goodness is that they identify the good with whatever people desire, want or prefer.<sup>14</sup> Assuming one particular form of subjective conception, the nasty utility-eker objection may appear to have a strong case against both standard and restrictive consequentialism. On this conception, the standard consequentialist will choose to pursue a particular friendship because she believes that it will maximize the expectable satisfaction of her self-regarding desires. But if she were to reflect on her friendship and realize that it in fact does not bring her maximal satisfaction, she ought to terminate it for consequentialist reasons. Thus, her friendship would be replaceable and therefore alienated friendship. Replaceability will not disappear if a consequentialist of this type goes restrictive. A

<sup>13</sup> See also Pettit and Brennan, 'Restrictive Consequentialism', p. 438.

<sup>14</sup> There are complexities regarding the distinction between subjective and objective conceptions of value that I cannot address here. I do not include versions of counterfactual desire-satisfaction theories of value.



restrictive consequentialist of this type may not pursue a particular friendship because she believes that it brings her maximal satisfaction. Still, if she were to believe that her pro-friendship predisposition did not bring her any satisfaction, she ought to replace it for consequentialist reasons. For example, suppose she were to reflect on her character and realize that more satisfaction could be had if she pursued friendships only with people who would provide her career with promotion and assistance. Then she ought to replace her pro-friendship predisposition with a 'pro-career-people-friendship predisposition' and terminate at least *some* of her friendships.<sup>15</sup> Whether she actually has this belief or desire, or even could have them, is not important. As long as she *ought* to replace her pro-friendship predisposition if she were to have them, her friendships would be alienated friendships.

The problem for the restrictive consequentialist arises, I think, because she may seem unable to provide any consequentialist justification for adopting a pro-friendship predisposition other than that it maximizes the good. The difficulty with this is that it is easy to imagine all kinds of circumstances in which adopting some other, incompatible predisposition in fact would maximize more good, in which case consequentialism prescribes that the agent ought to replace her pro-friendship predisposition. This creates the problem of replaceability. Thus, what the restrictive consequentialist needs is a consequentialist justification not just for preserving or adopting a pro-friendship predisposition, but for preserving or adopting such a predisposition *rather* than some other, incompatible predisposition. The only way for a consequentialist to achieve this, I think, would be to abandon the subjective conception of goodness which considers intrinsic goodness to be the maximal satisfaction of an individual's self-regarding desires and replace it with a conception that considers it to be an *objective value*, the presence of which makes a life better independently of how much satisfaction it brings. Typically, theories of objective value set out an ideal way of life, a central constituent of which is variously referred to as 'flourishing', 'self-realization' or 'eudaimonia', and then prescribes us to promote that way of life to the greatest extent possible. Whereas nothing seems to follow about the priority or importance of our disposi-

<sup>15</sup> Byron suggests a similar example. See Byron, 'Consequentialist Friendship and Quasi-instrumental Goods', p. 253.

tions or traits of character from subjective theories of the good (such theories only require that we are capable of a certain form of sentience), objective theories require that we pattern our dispositions and motivations after the good it identifies. Thus, flourishing or self-realization seems impossible without, for example, *self-respect*, *discernment* and *practical wisdom*. Then it follows that these virtues need to be in place for a person to live a good life.<sup>16</sup> Objective conceptions of the good are, of course, controversial and I cannot address all the complex issues that arise at this point. For the purposes of this paper I will assume that such a conception is at least defensible.<sup>17</sup> My concern will be to investigate whether a consequentialism that incorporates such a conception may contain additional resources to meet the challenge posed by the nasty utility-eker objection.

So, suppose that the values of 'flourishing' or 'self-realization' are central constituents of the good the restrictive consequentialist aims to secure. Thus, she restricts maximizing calculation with respect to certain types of individual acts by adopting a pro-friendship predisposition, not in order to maximize the expectable satisfaction of her self-regarding desires, but because she believes it better promotes the value of flourishing or self-realization. Given this conception of the good, what is the relation of the pro-friendship predisposition to the good the restrictive consequentialist aims to secure? Since having a pro-friendship predisposition promotes the good, it seems reasonable to assume that it is instrumental to it. However, it is not simply a contingent means to the good. On the contrary, on this conception, having a character that includes a pro-friendship predisposition may plausibly be seen to be *a necessary* means to the good.<sup>18</sup> Why? First, because genuine friendship seems to be a necessary means to the good. Thus, the trust, loyalty and integrity of genuine friendship

<sup>16</sup> For this approach to the virtues within a consequentialist framework, see David Elliot, 'Against the Leveling of Virtue: Essentials of a Consequentialist Account', *Journal of Social Philosophy*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (1999), pp. 65–82. In my approach to the friendship critique I am indebted to his version of virtue consequentialism.

<sup>17</sup> Consequentialists who have defended objective conceptions in one form or another include Railton, 'Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality'; Thomas Hurka, *Perfectionism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Julia Driver, *Uneasy Virtue* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> By 'necessary' I don't mean in the sense that the goal cannot be specified independently of a pro-friendship predisposition, but 'necessary' in the sense that this goal cannot be achieved without having such a predisposition (in other words, 'empirically necessary' rather than 'conceptually or logically necessary').

are constitutive of a shared vision that serves (apart from giving mutual pleasure and happiness) both to confirm and shape our sense of what's important, including a sense of our own importance, thereby contributing to our identity in a unique way that seems necessary for enjoying a good life.<sup>19</sup> Also, enjoying a good life seems to require a certain kind of *self-understanding*, i.e., one needs to be able to distinguish oneself from other selves, be able to normatively compare how one was in the past with how one is at the present, determine what counts as self-growth and so on.<sup>20</sup> But such self-understanding, it seems, requires a kind of intimacy with another person that is characteristic of genuine friendship. Thus, through my friend's interpretation of me, in particular his interpretation of my strengths and weaknesses, I come to understand my own character better.<sup>21</sup> Second, genuine friendship seems impossible without a *pro-friendship predisposition*. This follows since abandoning one's pro-friendship predisposition would fundamentally change the character and value friendships have for us. Thus, having a pro-friendship predisposition seems to be a *value-making* feature of these relationships. But then it follows that having a pro-friendship predisposition is not just a contingent means required to promote the good, but is in fact partly constitutive of that good, for a life without it would not be good; it would not be a life of flourishing.<sup>22</sup> Whereas contingent means for promoting subjective good always can be replaced by any number of other means which may be sufficient for promoting that good, a pro-friendship predisposition cannot be replaced without loss of value. It therefore has a certain special status in relation to the good that best can be characterized as a form of 'primacy' compared with other traits, motives or policies.

<sup>19</sup> When I speak of 'the good life' I mean, of course, a life that is *flourishing*, i.e., in the process of *realizing* itself. For a similar characterization of the role of friendship in the constitution of our selves, see Badhwar, 'Why It Is Wrong to Be Always Guided by the Best: Consequentialism and Friendship', p. 484.

<sup>20</sup> See Elliot, 'Against the Leveling of Virtue: Essentials of a Consequentialist Account', for a similar point.

<sup>21</sup> The idea that the intimacy of friendship contributes to our self-understanding is common to many philosophical accounts of friendship. See for example Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett, 'Friendship and the Self', *Ethics*, 108 (1998), pp. 502–27; Neera Badhwar Kapur, 'Love', in H. LaFollette (ed.), *Practical Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 42–69.

<sup>22</sup> It might be added that since friendship is always a more-than-one-place relation, a pro-friendship predisposition in the agent is also a necessary means to the flourishing of her friends.

Return now to the three conditions restrictive consequentialism must meet if it is to avoid the nasty utility-eker objection. Would restrictive consequentialism based on an objective conception of the good meet these conditions? It seems plausible, I think, that it would. First, the restrictive consequentialist will, for consequentialist reasons, *not* be motivated to re-evaluate her choice of a pro-friendship predisposition. This follows since consequentialism prescribes that preserving such a predisposition is a necessary means to the good, and she aims to promote that good. For example, even if she has a strong desire to succeed in her career and believes personal commitments might prevent her from having that desire satisfied, her desire for success will have to be weighed against her overall aim of living a good life. Since a necessary condition of living a good life is to have a pro-friendship predisposition, she will not be likely to abandon this predisposition even if the friendships proceeding from it should cease to be optimal. Pro-friendship predispositions would therefore tend to be extremely stable.

Second, the restrictive consequentialist ought, for consequentialist reasons, *not* adopt some other, incompatible predisposition. On the contrary, since having a pro-friendship predisposition is something without which the good can not be achieved, restrictive consequentialism entails a requirement to preserve this predisposition. In other words, unlike restrictive consequentialism based on a subjective conception of the good, restrictive consequentialism of this type does not entail replaceability.<sup>23</sup> Those who deny this would have to produce a convincing argument to the effect that possessing a pro-friendship predisposition is not necessary for 'flourishing' or 'self-realization'. I cannot think of any plausible conception of these notions that would make this seem reasonable.

Third, the way in which the restrictive consequentialist values her particular friendships does not give her friends reason to feel

<sup>23</sup> One objection could be that if the restrictive consequentialist were to achieve complete impartiality, i.e., sacrificed her own good by abandoning her pro-friendship predisposition in order to be a 'pure do-gooder', this would make the outcome in the form of flourishing in strangers better than if she preserved her predisposition (see Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, p. 30 for a similar point). One way of avoiding this type of objection might be to construe restrictive consequentialism along 'collective' rather than 'individualistic' lines, to use Parfit's terminology. Construed along collective lines, restrictive consequentialism prescribes that one should preserve or encourage a pro-friendship predisposition since if everyone had it, this would make the outcome better than if everyone had another predisposition. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out to me.

alienated. The restrictive consequentialist values having a pro-friendship predisposition because she believes that having a character that includes such a predisposition better promotes the objective good. But it does not follow that she values a *particular friendship* because she believes that it better promotes the objective good. On the contrary, being a restrictive consequentialist, she will pursue her particular friendships even if they fail to promote the objective good. Thus, she may act so as to benefit her friend out of a concern for *his* good, rather than the objective good.<sup>24</sup> Still, it may be objected, she acts *as if* her sole intrinsic good were maximal agent-neutral value, and so even if she thinks she values her friends as intrinsic goods, she must be prepared to sacrifice her pro-friendship predisposition under some circumstances and, therefore, also her friends. But the restrictive consequentialist of the type I have described is not prepared to sacrifice her pro-friendship predisposition.<sup>25</sup> This follows because she believes that preserving her pro-friendship predisposition is not just a contingent means to the good, something that can be replaced with some other means, but a necessary means to the good, something without which the good cannot be achieved. Since being prepared to abandon her pro-friendship predisposition would inevitably lead to alienation and loss of friends, thereby undermining 'flourishing' or 'self-realization', her friends know that she will not betray their friendships. They know that friendship betrayal simply is inconsistent with the kind of person she is since it contradicts the central value after which she patterns her character. They should therefore have no reason to feel alienated.

To sum up. In defense of restrictive consequentialism, I have argued that assuming a certain version of this view, it is not the case that the agent ought to replace her pro-friendship predisposition if sustaining it no longer is optimal. Since having a pro-friendship predisposition is in fact partly constitutive of the good, there simply is no question of it becoming non-optimal from the consequentialist's point of view. Let me conclude by considering a possible objection to this suggestion. The objection could be as

<sup>24</sup> See Railton, 'Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality', for a similar point.

<sup>25</sup> One exception might be in certain extreme circumstances of the type described by Mason in her example (see footnote 11). But, as Mason also points out, in such extreme circumstances, the consequentialist's friends would have no reason to feel alienated by her actions.

follows: it is not replaceability that is at the heart of the instrumental version of the nasty utility-eker objection. Rather, it is the realization that the value of the friendship for the restrictive consequentialist ultimately depends on agent-neutral value in the following sense: if adopting a pro-friendship predisposition had not promoted the objective good, the friendship would not have had any value for the restrictive consequentialist. Thus, even if the friend knows that the restrictive consequentialist, for consequentialist reasons, ought not abandon her pro-friendship predisposition, he will still have reason to feel alienated since he knows that the value of the friendship for the restrictive consequentialist ultimately depends on agent-neutral value rather than on the intrinsic value of the particular friendship itself. This follows since a pro-friendship predisposition is only valuable for the restrictive consequentialist in so far as it contributes to overall agent-neutral value.

At this point, I think, the consequentialist should just dig in her heels. First, while it is clear that being prepared to sacrifice one's friends will produce alienation because it undermines the trust, loyalty and integrity of friendship, it is not equally clear what will produce alienation in the absence of a preparedness to sacrifice one's friends. On the picture I have suggested, the restrictive consequentialist cares for her friend out of genuine love and is for consequentialist reasons not prepared to sacrifice their friendship. Why should her friend have reason to feel alienated? The idea must be that what produces alienation is her thought that the justification of their friendship ultimately lies in the fact that friendship is a necessary part of living a good life. But why should this thought produce alienation? It is not as if this thought provides the friend with a reason to feel that their friendship is *less valuable* than the good it promotes since, for the restrictive consequentialist, their friendship is in fact partly constitutive of that good. Neither does being valued as a necessary part of the consequentialist's conception of the good life mean that the friend is not valued for being *the particular person* he is. On the contrary, being that person is the reason why he is being valued as a necessary part of the consequentialist's conception of the good life since it is precisely in virtue of being that person he is the consequentialist's friend. At this point it seems as if the nonconsequentialist critic must come up with a different argument to show why consequentialist friendships produce alienation.

Second, why should preserving or adopting a pro-friendship predisposition be valuable for us if it did not promote overall good? It is difficult to see why having a pro-friendship predisposition should be worth having for *its own sake*. A world in which having such a predisposition was not correlated with promoting good states of affairs seems to be a world in which that predisposition could not be of any value to us. On the contrary, it seems that the extent to which having a pro-friendship predisposition can have any value for us at all is the extent to which that value can be grounded in something more than the value of the predisposition itself. Moreover, it seems that for this value to provide a moral justification for preserving or adopting a pro-friendship predisposition, it cannot simply be understood in terms of the personal values of one's particular friendships. Such values may show why it is good *for me* to preserve my pro-friendship predisposition, but they don't show why it is *right* to do so. For the value to provide a moral justification, it seems, we must be able to understand it in impersonal terms.<sup>26</sup> According to the restrictive consequentialist, the value that plays this role is the objective value of 'flourishing' or 'self-realization'.

Let me end with a short note of caution. I am aware that this response needs further defense; especially, more needs to be said about the proper criteria for 'flourishing' or 'self-realization', as well as why virtues such as friendship are necessary means to these goods. My aim has just been to suggest a general strategy for justifying restrictive consequentialism within a virtue-based approach in a way that seems to me to counter the nasty utility-eker objection.

*Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas*  
*University of Oslo*  
*P.O. Box 1020 Blindern*  
*0315 Oslo*  
*Norway*  
*edmund.henden@ifikk.uio.no*

<sup>26</sup> For a recent development of this strategy in response to the friendship critique, see Robert F. Card, 'Consequentialism, Teleology, and the New Friendship Critique', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 85 (2004), pp. 149–72.