

# **A thought on duty to the whole world, and why virtue must be an instrument to happiness.**

**Post by “SimonC” of January 16, 2022 at 4:30 PM**

I agree with your critique of utilitarianism: it is difficult to motivate limiting the number of morally relevant people, which leads to the conclusion that you should probably sell all your property and give to charities, which is clearly unacceptable even to utilitarians.

[Quote from smoothiekiwi](#)

P.S.: Now I'm gonna delve into Aristotle, because the idea of a "limited duty", or of a duty "in moderation" still seems very interesting. Gonna update when there's something new 😊

You'll find plenty of material! Virtue ethics is very popular in contemporary philosophy and there is a lot written.

I will say that I haven't gotten a satisfactory explanation from a virtue ethicist about what virtues *are*, why is being generous a virtue and being cruel not? I recently listened to an interview with Julia Annas, who seemed to think that this is simply obvious, which seems like you would just end up with whatever is accepted in your culture. Aristotle proposed to look at what virtuous people do, but that is a circular definition since you can't know who is virtuous without knowing what the virtues are. And it seems that Aristotle's own proposed virtues are not universal since he was writing specifically for Greek noblemen.