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A Composite Portrait of a True American Philosophy on Magnanimity

Andrew J. Corsa and Eric Schliesser

In this chapter, we offer a composite portrait of the concept of magnanimity in nineteenth-century America, focusing on the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau. In our portrait, these New England philosophers provide an account of magnanimity that reconciles it with humility, egalitarianism, and beneficence. They suggest that individuals can achieve the best sort of magnanimity without wealth, and without engaging in warfare or violence. In many respects, their project resembles that of philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, who similarly provide a modernized account of magnanimity. Yet the American account of magnanimity is also religious in a way more reminiscent of the Thomist and Stoic traditions. These Americans propose that, to become magnanimous, an individual must engage in the correct sort of philosophical inquiry, which involves direct engagement with God. They revitalize a trope from the Scottish Enlightenment—the notion of the magnanimous 'true philosopher'—but provide a novel, religious, and Americanized account of it. For example, they contend that, to become true philosophers, individuals must directly engage with and study wilderness, which they associate with America and contrast with the culture and conformity of Europe.

These American philosophers' notion of magnanimity is intertwined with their conception of the best sort of religious and philosophical inquiry, that of the self-reliant individual. Only those who engage in the best sort of inquiry can achieve the best magnanimity, and vice versa. Although they are self-reliant, magnanimous individuals are not self-sufficient like Aristotle's great-souled individuals. In order to engage in the sort of inquiry that is characteristic of them, those who are magnanimous and self-reliant require the assistance of others, discussions with magnanimous friends, and the correct sort of connection with God. These theorists have not only a theory of individual magnanimity, but also a theory of magnanimous friendship, and they insist that magnanimous individuals require more assistance from their friends than do others. These American philosophers also contend that the best sort of philosophical inquiry requires that individuals embrace a simple life of voluntary poverty. They offer their accounts of magnanimity and magnanimous friendship as correctives to ills of the American polity

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of their time—ills produced by the veneration of wealth and commerce and the perceived value of public opinion and esteem. They see themselves as critics of American capitalism, and they provide examples of magnanimous individuals who fruitfully embrace lifestyles that stand outside it.

Our method will be to paint a picture of the Civil War-era, New England-based, but self-consciously American approach to magnanimity—an approach that is explicitly developed to articulate a properly democratic ethos that corrects the ills of America's imperfect democracy. Each philosopher we discuss holds a unique philosophy, and would, on many points, disagree with the rest. Our intent is to develop a composite, cumulative picture which, while no one philosopher might have held it entire, nonetheless takes all into account.[1]

Before we get to the details of our analysis, we should offer a brief introduction of our unusual method which is inspired by, but also importantly deviates from, that which Francis Galton employs and discusses. A composite portrait,[2] as a method in the history of philosophy, is designed to bring out (a) characteristic features of a group's philosophizing in order (b) to illuminate characteristic features that may still resonate in today's philosophy, (c) without claiming that any of these features are present among all the members of the group studied (d) nor demanding that all the members of the group are treated equally. That is, compared to more standard methods in the historiography of philosophy, the construction of a composite portrait de-privileges the views of individual authors. In order to avoid misunderstanding, we offer four additional, brief comments on (a–d).

On (a): focusing on characteristic features of a group risks biasing one's presentation to what is unusual about that group. This is a feature, not a bug. That is to say, the composite portrait is intended to bring out and emphasize a certain deviance or distinctiveness shared by the group; it is not meant to capture all the characteristics that compose them or even all the characteristics they may share with other philosophers.

On (b): generating a composite portrait flirts with belonging to a species of Whig history, but the aim is not to glorify the present, but rather to make visible the often effaced traces of how our (perhaps tacit) self-conceptions came about and, thus, make these available for discussion. So a composite portrait has as much family resemblance[3] to Whig history as it does to genealogical-critical approaches.

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[1] On the philosophical significance of such composite pictures (with references to Wittgenstein's ethical lectures and Hayek), see: M. Ali Khan, 'Self-Interest, Self-Deception and the Ethics of Commerce', *Journal of Business Ethics* 52, no. 2 (2004): 189–206; M. Ali Khan, 'Composite Photography and Statistical Prejudice: Levy-Peart and Marshall on the Theorist and the Theorized', *European Journal of Political Economy* 20, no. 1 (2004): 23–30; M. Ali Khan, 'On Hayek's Road to Serfdom: 60 Years Later', *European Journal of Political Economy* 21, no. 4 (2005): 1026–41.

[2] Composite portraiture was developed by Francis Galton. See Galton, 'Composite Portraits, Made by Combining Those of Many Different Persons Into a Single Resultant Figure', *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 8 (1879): 132–44. For an influential treatment, see Allan Sekula, 'The Body and the Archive', *October* 39 (1986): 3–64.

[3] In fact, a composite portrait may be a *means* to exhibit the family resemblance among some views.

On (c): the composite portrait is not a perfect blend of the underlying members of the group to be followed by a mechanical operation (as in Galton's camera). Rather, it has more in common with an artist's choice in discerning what matters about the group. In particular, the selection of what matters is informed by an understanding of contemporary practices in order to bring out resonances that are still salient.

On (d): our method deviates clearly from Galton's original, underlying idea. Galton wished to capture generic yet especially salient (once brought to light) qualities that individuals have in common as a type. In that sense, in Galton's procedure, each member of the group has an equal statistical opportunity to contribute to the final, composite portrait. Philosophical groups tend not to be so egalitarian—we think that, in practice, some members are more significant and influential. In what follows, we sometimes privilege Emerson's perspective because he was the founding figure and the most powerful of his peers.

This is not the place for a full defence of the utility of the methodology we adopt. Moreover, such a defence would be sterile without exemplars.[4] So, we hope our chapter can bring out some of the benefits and limitations of composite portraiture as a historiographic method. We begin with Emerson, and then read each subsequent philosopher in relation to those already discussed. Each philosopher contributes to the broad, composite account we develop most substantially with respect to one or two specific themes. While we do not limit ourselves to a single theme when we discuss each thinker, one or two themes are dominant in order to facilitate ease of presentation and comprehension. When discussing Emerson, we emphasize the role of religion, when discussing Fuller we centre on friendship, and when we reflect on Thoreau we consider poverty and wilderness.

1. Emerson: Religious Magnanimity

In 1827, during Emerson's time serving with the Unitarian Church, he gave a sermon in which he identifies Jesus Christ as a perfect exemplar of the virtue of magnanimity. He claims, mixing Stoic and Christian themes, that those who caused Jesus to suffer 'were unable to comprehend in their pitiful ferocity that there is a greatness of soul to which evil fortune and good, to which the honour and dishonour of men, are accidents, a magnanimity so high and serene that mockery and scorn cannot touch its composure'.[5]

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[4] Another exemplar of the utility of composite portraiture in the history of philosophy is Liam Kofi Bright, 'Logical Empiricists on Race', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 65 (2017): 9–18. Bright's method is not identical to ours, but shares a family resemblance to it.

[5] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* Vol. 1, ed. Albert J. von Frank and David M. Robinson (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1989), Sermon No. 5, 88.

Emerson, like the other Transcendentalists we will discuss, employs the terms 'magnanimity' and 'greatness of soul' interchangeably, sometimes in the same sentence. We will follow their example. Emerson argues that, if we grant that Jesus is the great-souled man, then we can recognize that great-souled individuals can be humble, need not be wealthy, and need not desire the honour of their contemporaries. Thus, Emerson's conception of greatness of soul is very different from that which many theorists have attributed to Aristotle.[6] Emerson is aware that we, as everyday people, are 'influenced by the pomp of wealth and power', and tend to 'lavish our admiration on all that comes to us decorated with the signs of outward splendor'.[7] But according to Emerson, by reflecting on the example of Jesus, we can come to better realize that wealth, power, and other 'signs of outward splendor' are not necessary for a person to be truly magnanimous.[8]

In developing his account of magnanimity Emerson emphasizes whether individuals are worthy of honour rather than the honour they actually receive. According to Emerson's sermon, individuals can be magnanimous even if many others do not honour them, provided that they are genuinely *worthy* of honour, and that worthiness has nothing to do with outward appearances. After all, Jesus, the ideal great-souled man, was himself born 'a carpenter's son; born in a manger…the associate of humble men', and he died on the cross, facing the 'scorn' of many men, 'a death of pain and ignominy'.[9] Understanding that Jesus is the ideal, magnanimous individual, we can recognize that rank, origins, and aristocracy are irrelevant to greatness. Further, Jesus did not take action deliberately seeking to maximize the honour he received from others while he was alive. Emerson notes that Jesus did not pursue either wealth or military success, either of which might have brought greater fame from among his contemporaries.[10]

What is worthy of the greatest honour, and what matters to being a great-souled man? According to Emerson, Jesus accomplished a great good for all people, in bringing us a 'message from our Father in heaven' about God's 'will and the

Wesley Mott discusses this passage in relation to Emerson's evolving concept of Jesus: Wesley Mott, 'Emerson and Antinomianism: The Legacy of the Sermons', *American Literature* 50, no. 3 (1978): 384–5.

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[6] Alexander Sarch, Terence Irwin, and Christopher Cordner all acknowledge that there is some tension between Christian humility and Aristotelian magnanimity, even if Sarch and Irwin also claim that the two notions might be reconcilable: Alexander Sarch, 'What's Wrong with Megalopsychia?', *Philosophy* 83, no. 324 (2008): 251-2; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 2nd ed., trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999), 220; Christopher Cordner, 'Aristotelian Virtue and Its Limitations', *Philosophy* 69, no. 269 (1994): 293 and 305. Hardie argues that the Aristotelian great-souled man must have substantial wealth in order to have the resources necessary to accomplish his great deeds: W. F. R. Hardie, '"Magnanimity" in Aristotle's Ethics', *Phronesis* 23, no. 1 (1978): 73–4. Sarch and Cordner argue that great-souled men, 'within the limits of what virtue permits' (Sarch, 'What's Wrong', 236), actively seek and desire to maximize the honour they receive from their contemporaries: ibid., 239–41; Cordner, 'Aristotelian Virtue', 296–9.

[7] Emerson, *The Complete Sermons*, Sermon No. 5, 87.

[8] Ibid., 86.

[9] Ibid., 87–8.

[10] Ibid., 87.

purposes to which we exist'.[11] Ultimately, Jesus offered his life for the good of humankind. Emerson implies any of us, too, can achieve true greatness if we forget ourselves 'to spend' our 'strength in promoting the happiness of others'.[12] To become magnanimous and worthy of the greatest honour, individuals must engage in benevolent action, not so much in private charity, but in a kind of public philanthropy or beneficence, that is, works.

In this early sermon, Emerson's philosophy resonates with that of Saint Thomas Aquinas, who, as Jennifer Herdt argues in this volume, likewise identifies Jesus Christ as an ideal exemplar of greatness of soul. Like Emerson, Aquinas relates greatness of soul to self-emptying, beneficent service to others, and suggests that while great-souled individuals must be worthy of the greatest honour, they need not actively seek honour or actually receive it from their contemporaries.[13] Also like Emerson, Aquinas suggests that a person can possess both magnanimity and Christian humility. According to Aquinas, we can be both magnanimous and humble if we both: (1) 'honour' and 'esteem' other people more than we do ourselves when we compare the gifts of God in them to our own human weakness; and (2) contemn others ('*contemnit alios*') and consider ourselves 'worthy of the greatest things' when we reflect on our own gifts of God in comparison to others' human weakness.[14]

We do not mean to imply that Emerson consciously sought to align himself with Aquinas. Rather, we mean only to suggest that, regardless of Emerson's intentions, his early account of magnanimity can be read as part of an extended, Thomist tradition of Christian magnanimity. Additionally, this early sermon should not be taken as providing Emerson's full and mature account of magnanimity, although we argue that in many ways it shaped that account.

In 1832, Emerson resigned from his pastoral office in the Unitarian Church. In his sermon explaining his decision, Emerson is clear that he has not abandoned religion and that he still pays homage to God,[15] even if his conception of God is by this time far from traditionally Christian. Further, he insists that while he will resign his official position, he nonetheless intends to remain an informal, religious minister for the rest of his life.[16] Emerson claims that he must resign from his position only because he does not wish to participate in some of the church's formal rites, in which he would be required to engage were he to remain. He maintains that, regardless of what church leaders or traditions suggest, he—like every individual—should have the authority to decide for himself which rites to follow or not.[17]

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[11] Ibid., 89.

[12] Ibid.

[13] See Jennifer A. Herdt, Chapter 3 in this volume.

[14] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Vol. 3, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), II–II, q.129, a.3; Holloway, 'Christianity, Magnanimity, and Statesmanship', *The Review of Politics* 61, no. 4 (1999): 590. It is worth noting that, according Aquinas, those who contemn others need not feel any animosity towards them. Rather, as Holloway notes, a magnanimous person's contempt 'is simply a looking down upon others as beneath him' (Holloway, 'Christianity, Magnanimity', 589).

[15] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. 4, ed. Wesley T. Mott (Colombia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 191.

[16] Ibid., 194; Mark S. Cladis, 'Religion, Democracy, and Virtue: Emerson and the Journey's End', *Religion & Literature* 41, no. 1 (2009): 54–5.

In his personal journal, Emerson contends that he will remain religious, 'a disciple of Christ', even if it is not wise for him 'to belong to any religious party', like the Unitarian church.[18] Emerson frees himself to follow his own religious convictions, rather than those of church authorities. In addition, he seems to associate the church with faction, rather than the public good.

There is no reason to suppose that the views he put forward in his sermons would coincide with his mature philosophical perspective. In fact, there is good reason to expect the latter would make a break with traditional religion. In his private journal, Emerson even implies that greatness of soul may, itself, be linked with the ability to break with tradition, to the extent that breaking with tradition requires originality of reflection and experience:

> Often the choice is not given you between greatness in the world & greatness of soul which you will choose, but both advantages are not compatible…I feel a joy in my solitude that the merriment of vulgar society can never communicate. There is a pleasure in the thought that the particular tone of my mind at this moment may be new in the Universe…I occupy new ground in the world of spirits, untenanted before.[19]

In this journal entry, written months before the sermon in which he attributes greatness of soul to Jesus Christ, Emerson appears to attribute greatness to himself, suggesting that his greatness of soul is linked to his originality of thought and feelings.[20]

Nonetheless, in the same journal entry, Emerson suggest that his thoughts, while breaking with tradition, still lead him towards the contemplation of God: 'I doubt not I tread on the highway that leads to Divinity.'[21] He contends that *anyone* who develops his or her own original thoughts in the correct sort of way—as a great-souled person does—will be led to reflect on God. In a journal article from 1830, Emerson considers 'a man of honour & generosity', who nonetheless 'has an aversion to religion, [and] treats it with a degree of contempt'.[22] If this man improves himself and his mode of inquiry—'if he cultivate all these generous sentiments'—then he will inevitably 'make advancements unconsciously in religious excellence' and eventually 'God will appear as he is to his soul'.[23] In another journal entry, Emerson writes that when any man comes to trust himself, listen to his own reason, and 'scorn to be a secondary man', he will not become selfish, but will instead 'fall back on truth itself & God', and be led to perfection 'in the Divine Mind'.[24]

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[17] Emerson, *The Complete Sermons*, Vol. 4, 192; Mott, 'Emerson and Antinomianism', 387–8.

[18] Emerson, *The Journals*, Vol. III, 20 June 1831, 259; Frank M. Meola, 'Emerson Between Faith and Doubt', *New England Review* 32, no. 3 (2011): 116.

[19] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. III, 1826–32, ed. William H. Gilman and Alfred R. Ferguson (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), 17 April 1827, 78. The use of 'vulgar' need not be pejorative. All it means is 'common society'. But, in context, Emerson's use of 'vulgar' clearly signals his own sense of spiritual superiority. Below, we comment on his egalitarianism.

[20] Meola, 'Emerson Between Faith', 115.

[21] Emerson, *The Journals*, Vol. III, 17 April 1827, 78.

This discussion sets the stage for our understanding of Emerson's mature theory of magnanimity. In his famous essay 'Self-Reliance', Emerson suggests that we should look within ourselves in order to determine the truth, rather than looking outwards and unthinkingly accepting what others maintain.[25] A true man, a magnanimous man, must never blindly adopt the opinions of others: 'Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.'[26] Yet being a nonconformist is difficult, especially when one faces widespread disapproval—'the discontent of the multitude'.[27] When faced with the 'feminine rage' of a large number of people, Emerson claims that a person must possess the manly 'habit of magnanimity' in order to remain a nonconformist and treat the multitude's rage 'as a trifle of no concernment'.[28] In addition, we should not be afraid to vocally express a change of mind and appear inconsistent to others, if looking within ourselves leads to a different conclusion from what we previously believed. Emerson contrasts people of 'little minds', who adhere to a 'foolish consistency', with the magnanimous individual who has a 'great soul', and who would not be afraid of changing his position over time.[29]

He thus identifies the magnanimous individual as the gendered masculine individual who displays great self-reliance. Truly great-souled individuals are able to look within themselves and break with tradition and society. But Emerson is not suggesting that individuals would be ideally self-reliant provided they trust private impulses, whatever they might be, and do whatever they please.[30] Rather, to be truly self-reliant and magnanimous, we must learn how to *correctly* look within ourselves. To reflect on Emerson's notion of the correct sort of inquiry, consider the role that he claims friends play for a self-reliant individual. In his journal, he indicates that he wants to understand how the 'principle of self-reliance' relates to what we call 'philosophical friendship', and he writes:

> It is true that there is a faith wholly a man's own . . . But at the same time how useful, how indispensable has been the ministry of our friends to us, our teachers . . . the

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[22] Ibid., 24 July 1830, p. 191.

[23] Ibid., 192.

[24] Ibid., 27 September 1830, 198–9.

[25] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, ed. Joel Porte (New York: Library of America, 1983), 259; Randy L. Friedman, 'Traditions of Pragmatism and the Myth of the Emersonian Democrat', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 43, no. 1 (2007): 161–2.

[26] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 261.

[27] Ibid., 264.

[28] Ibid., 265.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Harry Hayden Clark, 'Conservative and Mediatory Emphases in Emerson's Thought', in *Transcendentalism and Its Legacy,* ed. Myron Simon and Thornton H. Parsons (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1966), 44 and 48–9.

> living & the dead. I ask advice. It is not that I wish my companion to dictate to me the course I should take…It is that he may stimulate me by his thoughts to unfold my own.[31]

Self-reliant, magnanimous individuals cannot arrive at the truth simply by looking into themselves. Quite the contrary, it is 'indispensable' that they consider what friends and teachers have to say, and let it 'stimulate' them when they look within. Likewise, Emerson is clear that it can be useful to reflect on the work of geniuses, and he claims that books by these geniuses 'are the best type of influence of the past'.[32] We should not unthinkingly accept what books say, but they are among 'the best of things' provided we recognize that 'they are for nothing but to inspire' our own thinking, when we look into ourselves.[33] Finally, Emerson is clear that, in order to look within ourselves correctly, individuals must also first have studied the natural sciences.[34]

Emerson maintains, much as he does in several of the early journal entries discussed above, that when self-reliant, magnanimous individuals *correctly* look within themselves, they come into alignment with God—with the spiritual unity Emerson calls the 'over-soul'.[35] When they correctly look within, their genius is 'put…in communication with the internal ocean' which transcends them;[36] they are put in touch with the source of all life and being.[37] And it is God—the over-soul—that provides magnanimous, self-reliant individuals with truth: 'We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity. When we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams'.[38] Genuine self-reliance involves the practice of aligning oneself with God in a way that allows one to receive the truth.[39]

While Emerson does not always use the word 'God', that is nonetheless what he means. He is clear that the 'immense intelligence' with which the self-reliant, magnanimous individual comes in contact is the 'divine spirit', and he writes: 'The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure, that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. It must be that when God speaketh he should communicate, not one thing, but all things'.[40] Granted, Emerson's notion of God, at this point, is not traditionally Christian; rather, it is the notion of the 'over-soul', an impersonal, 'eternal ONE', the 'soul of the whole' which is also in every individual.[41] Limitations of space prevent us from exploring the details of Emerson's theology, his neo-Stoic conception of God, yet we offer further insights into his conception of religiosity throughout what follows.

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[31] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. IV, 1832–4, ed. Alfred R. Ferguson (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964), 22 March 1834, 269; Clark, 'Conservative and Mediatory', 49.

[32] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 56. [33] Ibid., 57. [34] Ibid., 55–6.

[35] Friedman, 'Traditions of Pragmatism', 163.

[36] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 272; Friedman, 'Traditions of Pragmatism', 163.

[37] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures,* 269.

[38] Ibid. Clark insightfully writes: 'Emerson thought that when the Primal Mind or Over-Soul reveals itself inwardly to the individual, he must be right' (Clark, 'Conservative and Mediatory', 38).

[39] Cladis, 'Religion, Democracy', 68; Friedman, 'Traditions of Pragmatism', 165. In contrast to our interpretation, Cavell writes that he does not take Emerson's reference to immense intelligence 'to be an allusion to God or to the Over-Soul' and instead takes it 'as an allusion to, or fantasy of, our shared language' (Stanley Cavell, 'Finding as Founding: Taking Steps in Emerson's "Experience"', in *Emerson's Transcendental Etudes*, ed. David Justin Hodge (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 140).

In his essay 'The Over-Soul', Emerson is even clearer that self-reliant, magnanimous individuals arrive at the greatest truth and insight only by aligning themselves with God—the over-soul: 'Genius is religious. It is the imbibing of the common heart', namely the over-soul. 'There is, in all great poets, a wisdom of humanity which is superior to any talents they exercise'.[42] Emerson's theory of self-reliance cannot be separated from either his notion of divinity or his distinctive religiosity.[43]

Emerson develops this account of how self-reliant, magnanimous individuals seek truth in other texts as well, such as his chapter on Plato in *Representative Men*. There he endorses Plato's contention that virtue is knowledge,[44] and he suggests that the most important knowledge is knowledge of being and existence.[45] He contends that individuals can only achieve this most important knowledge by aligning themselves with God. Only those who look properly within themselves can align themselves with God and, thus, receive the knowledge necessary for the greatest virtue:

> The supreme good is reality; the supreme beauty is reality; and all virtue and felicity depends on the science of the real; for courage is nothing else than knowledge . . . The notion of virtue is not to be arrived at, except through direct contemplation of the divine essence.[46]

Emerson suggests that those who are most virtuous—including those who are magnanimous—are those who have performed the best sort of religious, philosophical inquiry, aligning themselves with God.

So, while Emerson's more mature theory of greatness of soul is in certain respects distant from his earlier account, and from that of Aquinas, it nonetheless embraces a churchless type of religiosity. Emerson retains the view that magnanimous individuals need not be wealthy or seek honour. Likewise, he still implies that magnanimity is compatible with humility and with egalitarianism. His is an egalitarianism that appeals to some of the values of those living in a modern democracy, while correcting and challenging the values of public opinion and the marketplace they are attached to.

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[40] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 269. [41] Ibid., 385–6. [42] Ibid., 396.

[43] Friedman, 'Traditions of Pragmatism', 163; Cladis, 'Religion, Democracy', 53. In stark contrast to our position, Kateb attempts to provide an account of Emerson's theory that acknowledges but downplays his religiousness: George Kateb, *Emerson and Self-Reliance* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995), 61–95.

[44] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 646 and 657; G. Borden Flanagan, 'Emerson's Democratic Platonism in Representative Men', in *A Political Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Alan M. Levine and Daniel S. Malachunk (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2011), 417.

[45] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 639, 646, and 657; Flanagan, 'Emerson's Democratic Platonism', 417 and 426.

[46] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 646.

The egalitarian strain becomes clear in the following. For the greatest, magnanimous, and self-reliant individuals are those who, in aligning themselves with the over-soul, recognize the unity of all things, and see that the differences between people are illusions. Quoting the 'supreme Krishna', Emerson writes, 'You are not distinct from me. That which I am, thou art . . . Men contemplate distinctions, because they are stupefied with ignorance'.[47] But if we are all one and united, and if the differences between us are mere illusions, then there is a significant sense in which we are fundamentally equal to one another, and the great-souled man would recognize this equality.[48] In contrast to Aristotle's theory of greatness, which some theorists have seen as incompatible with robust accounts of egalitarianism,[49] Emerson's theory of greatness embraces true equality as opposed to the false, superficial flattering equality he associated with public opinion.

Likewise, Emerson implies that it is possible for any individual to align him/herself with the over-soul, insofar as each is equally 'part or particle of God'.[50] This is not to say that any person could, with effort, acquire advanced scientific knowledge or gain the greatest analytical precision or verbal eloquence. Instead, rejecting a tradition of a natural hierarchy of souls, Emerson suggests only that each of us could, in principle, gain equal truth and knowledge both about the nature of being and about what is moral for us.[51] But since he indicates that this knowledge is what is most important for acquiring virtue, including magnanimity, he implies that anyone could, in principle, become magnanimous.

In addition, Emerson views the fact that we all have equal access to the over-soul as providing a firm basis for a theory of democracy: 'Democracy, Freedom has its root in the Sacred truth that every man hath in him the divine Reason'.[52] In his view, most people are not actually guided by reason, and so it is wrong to think that 'practical Man is better to the state than a scholar'.[53] Nonetheless, each individual has the authority to listen to himself and must not blindly believe or obey either the church or political authorities.[54] It is reasonable for all (alas, male only) citizens to participate in government and make up their own minds, because, whether they are guided by reason or not, they all nonetheless have the

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[47] Ibid., 638.

[48] Flanagan, 'Emerson's Democratic Platonism', 417 and 430–1.

[49] Cordner, 'Aristotelian Virtue', 294; Howard Curzer, 'Aristotle's Much Maligned *Megalopsychos*', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 69, no. 2 (1991): 151.

[50] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 10. Cladis notes that, according to Emerson, we are all spiritual creatures and divine inspiration is available directly to each of us: Cladis, 'Religion, Democracy', 58.

[51] Holzwarth makes similar yet distinct claims: John Holzwarth, 'Emerson and the Democratization of Intellect', *Polity* 43, no. 3 (2011): 314 and 325–6.

[52] Emerson, *Journals and Miscellaneous,* Vol. IV, 357.

[53] Ibid., 356.

[54] Holzwarth, 'Emerson and the Democratization', 319; Friedman, 'Traditions of Pragmatism', 157.

God-given capacity to reason: '[T]here is imparted to every man the Divine light of reason sufficient not only to plant corn & grind wheat but also to illuminate all his life his social, political, religious actions.'[55] It is clear that Emerson's defence of democracy rests on his contention that we all have equal access to truth because of our equal relation with God, the over-soul.

Finally, because of their relationship with the over-soul, Emerson's great-souled individuals can remain humble and pious. As suggested earlier, Aquinas claims that Christian great-souled individuals can remain humble by crediting God with their great accomplishments and by being aware that, if they focus strictly on what they would be like if deprived of God's gifts, they pale in comparison to other people. Likewise, Emerson suggests that we should piously recognize the aid we receive from God, and that our greatest actions are not up to us alone.[56] We should recognize that our genius and the great actions we and others perform are not our own, but were instead received from the over-soul:

> We have never come at the true and best benefit of any genius, so long as we believe him an original force . . . He appears as an exponent of a vaster mind and will. The opaque self becomes transparent with the light of the First Cause.[57]

2. Emerson and Fuller: Magnanimous Friendship

As suggested, Emerson claims that for individuals to perform the sort of inquiry necessary for them to be aligned with the over-soul and become self-reliant and magnanimous, they must engage with the right sort of friends who can inspire them and also focus attention on great books and geniuses from history. More generally, his view is that social interaction is of key importance:

> We have social strengths. Our affection towards others creates a sort of vantage or purchase which nothing will supply. I can do that by another which I cannot do alone. I can say to you what I cannot first say to myself. Other men are lenses through which we read our own minds.[58]

We can best 'read our own minds' and recognize what we truly believe by being inspired by discourse with others. A democratic society that preserves freedom of thought and speech and encourages discourse on political issues is thus conducive to genuine self-reliance and magnanimity.[59]

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[55] Emerson, *Journals and Miscellaneous,* Vol. IV, 356. As noted, in passing, above, Emerson seems to have a masculine gendered conception for these claims.

[56] Cladis, 'Religion, Democracy', 77.

[57] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures,* 631.

[58] Ibid., 616.

[59] While Emerson does not make this point about democracies explicitly, Flanagan is correct that it is clearly implied (Flanagan, 'Emerson's Democratic Platonism', 432).

But in Emerson's view, to become great, it is not sufficient for us to focus attention solely on the people we encounter in everyday life who are neither great-souled nor geniuses. Our discourse with such people may be useful in helping us to determine our own thoughts, but there is too great a risk of us conforming our beliefs to some of theirs.[60] 'Men resemble their contemporaries', Emerson points out, and he worries about the 'assimilation' which 'goes on between men of one town, of one sect, of one political party'.[61] His worries, here, resemble his worries, discussed earlier, about belonging to established religious parties; he was concerned with issues of partisanship and, to use eighteenth-century terminology, the political impact of faction.[62]

To avoid the dual risk of mass conformity and factionalism, Emerson contends that we need to converse with living geniuses or engage with historical exemplars. Geniuses help us to understand our own minds, but without the same risk of conformity, insofar as they are able to 'transcend fashions, by fidelity to universal ideas' which they received through direct access to the over-soul rather than merely heard from others.[63] Such individuals 'defend us from our contemporaries'.[64] Insofar as the geniuses Emerson values have access to the over-soul, they would also be magnanimous. Emerson is clear that, instead of uncritically accepting what the genius has to say, we should treat geniuses as examples that can help us develop our own abilities and make new discoveries for ourselves.[65] They illuminate the paths by which we, ourselves, might gain access to the over-soul.[66]

In his essay 'Friendship', Emerson directly discusses the nature of friendship between magnanimous individuals. Focusing on the society of those with the best, highest friendship, he states: 'He only is fit for this society who is magnanimous.'[67] Magnanimous friends, he writes, would be to each other 'large, formidable natures'.[68] And again, speaking of the magnanimous friend, he writes: 'Let him be to thee for ever a sort of beautiful enemy, untameable, devoutly revered.'[69]

To better understand the role that interactions with magnanimous geniuses play in the best sort of inquiry, consider the friendship shared by Emerson and Fuller, as well as the debates they shared on the topic of friendship. Not only is their friendship illustrative of our discussion, but Fuller also offers a philosophical account of friendship which is distinctive and in many ways more robust than Emerson's.

In Fuller's *Memoirs,* edited after her untimely death (1850), Emerson describes his friendship with Fuller, who was one of his protégées, remarking that, throughout her life, she possessed the character traits of 'sleepless curiosity' and 'magnanimity'.

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[60] Ibid., 436.

[61] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 627.

[62] For useful background to the idea of faction, see: Mark G. Spencer, 'Hume and Madison on Faction', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (2002): 869–96.

[63] Ibid., 627; Flanagan, 'Emerson's Democratic Platonism', 436–7.

[64] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 627.

[65] For a different but related assertion: Clark, 'Conservative and Mediatory', 50.

[66] Flanagan, 'Emerson's Democratic Platonism', 428.

[67] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 350.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., 351.

He writes that he came to 'admire her genius', but that their friendly interactions exhibited 'superficiality and halfness'. Using the term 'magnanimity' a second time in just a few sentences, Emerson writes that 'it seemed her magnanimity was not met' by his own.[70]

During her lifetime, Fuller also worried about whether her friendship with him was truly magnanimous. Reflecting on Emerson's contention that magnanimous friends would be 'beautiful enemies', she writes to Emerson: 'But did not you ask for a "foe" in your friend? Did not you ask for a "large formidable nature"? But a beautiful foe, I am not yet to you. Shall I ever be? I know not.'[71]

Emerson and Fuller agree in many ways on what the best sort of friendship should be like. Echoing Hume and Smith, they emphasize that magnanimous friends are capable of great sincerity and frankness with each other, and are also able to express disagreements with each other, on truly fundamental issues, without animosity. But Emerson and Fuller go a step further, suggesting that unless friends, with complete sincerity, challenge each other and disagree, they will not be able to best discover the truth for themselves. The best friendships consist of lived disagreement. Emerson writes that he desires a magnanimous friend who can show 'manly resistance' and that it is 'better to be a nettle in the side of your friend than his echo'.[72] He states that his friends 'carry out the world for me to new and noble depths, and enlarge the meaning of all my thoughts'.[73] Fuller likewise maintains that the best sort of friend 'was made to correspond to that which we are, to teach it, to learn from it, to torture it, to enchant it, to deepen and at last to satisfy our wants'.[74] She criticizes Emerson for pushing a particular perspective on her, when instead he should have 'trusted me, believing that I knew the path for myself'.[75] Emerson and Fuller agree that the best of friends must be entirely honest with each other, and not shy away from truth, in order to best help each other arrive at truth, even if they disagree over its nature. Emerson writes: 'A friend is a person with whom I can be sincere'; he suggests that with a magnanimous friend 'I may drop even those undermost garments of dissimulation, courtesy, and second thought'.[76] Fuller hopes that Emerson will recognize her 'fearlessness which shrinks from no truth in myself and others'.[77]

Emerson writes that magnanimous friends help us to 'read our own minds' in ways that non-magnanimous friends cannot, and the letters Emerson exchanged with Fuller helped him to clarify his own thought. He mined his letters with her when writing his essays, to the point where, according to Emerson, 'She stigmatized our friendship as commercial',[78] a criticism which reflects several of Fuller's theoretical disagreements with Emerson.

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[70] R. W. Emerson, W. H. Channing, and J. F. Clark, *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, Vol. 1 (Boston: Robert B. Others, 1881), 287–8.

[71] Margaret Fuller, *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*, Vol. II, 1839–41, ed. Robert N. Hudspeth (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 29 September 1840, 160; David Dowling, *Emerson's Protégés* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 44–5.

[72] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 350.

[73] Ibid., 343.

[74] Fuller, *The Letters*, October 1841, 235.

[75] Ibid., 160.

[76] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 347.

[77] Fuller, *The Letters*, 29 September 1840, 159.

Emerson's account of friendship emphasizes the role each friend has in inspiring the other's intellectual development, while downplaying (if not denying) the role that friends have in fundamentally changing each other's natures.[79] In contrast, according to Fuller, the best of friends do not merely help us 'read our own minds'; instead, the best sort of friends fundamentally change each other, making each other better.[80] In contrast to Emerson's account, Fuller insists that when the best sort of friends interact, they do not merely come to 'know themselves more', but rather they '*are* more for having met, and regions of their being, which would else have laid sealed in cold obstruction, burst into leaf and bloom and song'.[81] Fuller holds that the self is only what it is because of the people with whom it interacts, and it can only reach its greatest potential by being changed by the best of friends.[82] She provides an account of self that is not fixed; instead, selves can mutually change and improve each other, and each person's nature changes over time. A dynamic friendship facilitates the becoming of the individual's essence.

So, too, instead of focusing on individual magnanimity, she emphasizes the importance of magnanimous friendships, insisting that relationships are primary while selves, which are developed as a result of relationships, are secondary. Additionally, Fuller maintains that friends change each other, not only through inspiring abstract thought, but through their emotions and through the everyday specifics of human interaction.[83] She laments Emerson's 'tedious, tedious attempts to learn the universe by thought alone'.[84] She, thus, anticipates Thoreau's focus on the experimental life.

Fuller also challenges Emerson's contention that the best sort of friend one can have would need to be truly magnanimous and beautiful.[85] She writes, in a Socratic vein, that we sometimes 'love most' those who lack the greatest beauty insofar as they are 'that which by working most powerfully on our peculiar nature awakes most deeply and constantly in us the idea of beauty'.[86] Fuller suggests that even those who lack beauty and magnanimity might inspire the idea of beauty in us, and so be just as highly loved and just as helpful to us as we seek to engage in the best sort of inquiry.[87] In light of this disagreement, consider the different ways in which Emerson and Fuller compare the importance of friends and books. Emerson writes, 'I do then with my friends as I do with my books',[88] and he implies that the best books—like the most valuable friends—would be those with genuine beauty and genius, which can best inspire us to 'read our own minds'. In contrast, Fuller suggests that the friends and books which are most valuable to us might not be those with the greatest genius.[89] She writes that good books are 'companions of our lives',[90] and she suggests that even though Emerson's second series of essays 'miss what we expect in the work of a great poet or the great philosopher',[91] Emerson's work is nonetheless good because, like the best sort of friend, it inspires ideas of beauty in us, and, while not great in itself, 'will lead to great and complete poems—somewhere'.[92]

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[78] Emerson, Channing, and Clark, *Memoirs of Margaret*, 288; Joan von Mehren, *Minerva and the Muse: A Life of Margaret Fuller* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 131.

[79] Jeffrey Steele, 'Transcendental Friendship: Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau', in *The Cambridge Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson,* ed. Joel Porte and Sandra Morris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 132.

[80] For distinct but related contentions: Charles Capper, *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life*, Vol. 2, *The Public Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 73.

[81] Margaret Fuller Ossoli, *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, Vol. I (London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1852), 42.

[82] David M. Robinson, 'Margaret Fuller, Self-Culture, and Associationism', in *Margaret Fuller and Her Circles*, ed. Brigitte Bailey, Katheryn P. Viens, and Conrad Edick Wright (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2013), 89.

[83] Capper, *Margaret Fuller*, 73.

[84] Fuller, *The Letters*, 25 October 1840, 170.

[85] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 349–51.

[86] Fuller, *The Letters*, October 1841 [?], 235.

Despite their disagreements, Emerson and Fuller would agree that friends are indispensable for becoming magnanimous, self-reliant individuals. Further, both are clear that while magnanimous individuals are self-reliant, they are not self-sufficient, but instead require outside assistance from friends, and the support of God, without which they cannot arrive at the truth.[93]

The significance of their position comes out in contrast to Aristotle. In his *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle emphasizes the importance of friendship, and he even remarks that great-souled individuals 'cannot live by reference to someone else, unless that person is a friend'.[94] But Aristotle also claims that great-souled individuals are largely self-sufficient, requiring comparatively little aid from others and few external goods.[95] In addition, Aristotle's great-souled individual is 'the sort of person to bestow benefits, but he is ashamed to receive them',[96] and when Aristotelian magnanimous individuals do receive aid, they attempt to give back more than they received. In contrast, Emerson and Fuller emphasize the great assistance magnanimous individuals require from others, and they claim that magnanimous individuals accept the aid freely and realize that the aid is so substantial that, against the marketplace norm of equal exchange, they can never pay it back:

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[87] For distinct but similar contentions: ibid., July [?] 1841 [?], 214; Steele, 'Transcendental Friendship', 132.

[88] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 353.

[89] For discussion of Fuller's comparison of friends to books: Eric Schliesser, 'A Definition of Analytical Philosophy by a True Critic; Or Margaret Fuller Discovered', *Digressions and Impressions* (blog), 14 August 2014, http://digressionsnimpressions.typepad.com/digressionsimpressions/2014/08/the-only-true-criticism-fuller.html.

[90] Margaret Fuller, 'Emerson's Essays', in *Margaret Fuller: American Romantic*, ed. Perry Miller (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1969), 200.

[91] Ibid., 198.

[92] Ibid., 200.

[93] Cladis, 'Religion, Democracy', 67.

[94] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Christopher Rowe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1124b31–1125a1.

[95] Ibid., 1125a11–12; Howard J. Curzer, 'A Great Philosopher's Not So Great Account of Great Virtue: Aristotle's Treatment of "Greatness of Soul"', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 20, no. 4 (1990): 521. For clarification of the notion of self-sufficiency: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177a27–1177b1.

[96] Ibid., 1124b9–10. Fischer develops an account of a vicious self-sufficiency, and while he does not attribute it to Aristotle, he does quote this passage in the context of developing it: Jeremy Fischer, 'The Ethics of Reflexivity: Pride, Self-Sufficiency, and Modesty', *Philosophical Papers* 45, no. 3 (2016): 368–78.

> All I know is reception . . . I worship with wonder the great Fortune. My reception has been so large, that I am not annoyed by receiving this or that superabundantly . . . When I receive a new gift, I do not macerate my body to make the account . . . square, for, if I should die, I could not make the account square. The benefit overran the merit the first day, and has overran the merit ever since.[97]

Great-souled individuals require intellectual aid more than many people do. Other people might live and engage in reflection with comparatively little aid from others. But those who do will never participate in the best sort of inquiry, which is necessary to align with God and achieve true magnanimity. To engage in ideal inquiry, and to become magnanimous, we are indebted to our friends and to God.

3. Emerson, Fuller, Hume, and Smith: An Ongoing Tradition

We have already noted a few echoes of the ideas of Hume and Smith in the work of Emerson and Fuller. Here we introduce a more detailed consideration of their views on the value of magnanimity and magnanimous friendships in order to sharpen the contours of our composite account of Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau. Our discussion, here, also offers clearer indication of the fact that Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau belong to an extended, evolving philosophical tradition in which the notion of magnanimity develops over time.

These American philosophers saw their theories as alternatives to those proposed by earlier British and Scottish philosophers. For example, Emerson articulates Hume's sceptical worry about why humans believe 'that an uniform experience will continue uniform'[98] in order to criticize materialism and provide context for Emerson's own new theory of Transcendentalism. And Thoreau explicitly criticizes the way Smith's account of economics is taught in *Walden*'s chapter on 'Economy', indicating that professors who understand 'political economy' might still not understand 'that economy of living which is synonymous with philosophy'.[99] That said, even if Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau had had no acquaintance with the work of Hume and Smith, it would still have been valuable to consider earlier Scottish theories of magnanimity in order to better understand the American approach by contrast and in order to appreciate the American approach in historical context.

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[97] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 491.

[98] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 194. While Emerson does not explicitly name Hume in this essay, there is good reason to think he has Hume in mind. As a young man, Emerson was concerned with Hume's sceptical arguments. In a letter to his aunt Mary in which he writes about Hume's sceptical arguments, he refers to Hume as the 'Scotch Goliath' and asks 'Where is the accomplished stripling who can cut off his most metaphysical head?' (Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Selected Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Joel Myerson (New York: Colombia University Press, 1997), 16 October 1823, 69). Likewise, in a much later essay, Emerson refers to Hume's 'keen observation, that no copula had been detected between any cause and effect' (ibid., 899).

According to Hume, greatness of mind is not a single virtue, but is instead a *category* of virtues, which includes not only magnanimity, but also other heroic virtues such as 'courage, intrepidity, ambition, [and] love of glory'.[100] Hume thinks of these as 'manly' virtues.[101] Further, great-minded friends are able to be completely open with one another: 'it is only among intimate friends or people of very manly behavior, that one is allowed to do himself justice'.[102] Magnanimous friends are those who best exhibit what he calls 'true liberty'; they recognize each other as 'equals', treat each other with 'candor and sincerity', and can have discussions about controversial subjects on which they strongly disagree without 'animosity'.[103] In his obituary for Hume, Adam Smith characterizes Hume as a magnanimous man, and implies that this was the quality that enabled Hume and his friends to exhibit 'true liberty', talking frankly with each other, even about death, while Hume was on his deathbed.[104]

Like Emerson, these Scottish Enlightenment philosophers provide an account of magnanimity that aims to render it compatible with many modern values.[105] Hume suggests that the ancients would 'consider as romantic and incredible, the degree of humanity, clemency, order, tranquility and other social virtues…we have attained in modern times'.[106] And much like Emerson, Hume provides an account of greatness according to which only those who are genuinely benevolent, and who exhibit modern, social virtues, can attain the best sort of magnanimity.[107]

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[99] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience, and Other Writings*, 3rd edn, ed. William Rossi (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 39. For a substantial discussion of the relation between Thoreau's and Smith's philosophy, see: Eric Schliesser, 'Weekly Philo of Economics: Our Slavery, Adam Smith and Thoreau', *New APPS: Art, Politics, Philosophy, Science* (blog), 17 January 2012, http://www.newappsblog.com/2012/01/the-secret-cord-bewteen-adam-smith-and-thoreau.html.

[100] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects* (London: Printed for John Noon, 1739), SBN 599; Marie A. Martin, 'Hume on Human Excellence', *Hume Studies* 18, no. 2 (1992): 385.

[101] David Hume, *Four Dissertations* (London: Printed for A. Millar, 1772), BEA 84; David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (London: Printed for A. Millar, 1751), SBN 319.

[102] Hume, *An Enquiry*, SBN 264.

[103] Hume, *Four Dissertations*, Ded 1–3; Eric Schliesser, *Adam Smith: Systematic Philosopher and Public Thinker* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). See in particular chapter 15, which discusses 'true liberty' in relation to Hume, Smith, and the value they place on magnanimity.

[104] Adam Smith, 'Letter From Adam Smith, LL.D. to William Strahan, ESQ', in David Hume, *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene W. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987, rev. ed.), xlv–xlvi. For a discussion of Smith's characterization of Hume's magnanimity in his obituary, see Andrew J. Corsa, 'Modern Greatness of Soul in Hume and Smith', *Ergo: An Open Access Journal of Philosophy* 2, no. 2 (2015): 46–55. Schliesser and Hanley also touch on the role of magnanimity in the obituary: Eric Schliesser, 'The Obituary of a Vain Philosopher: Adam Smith's Reflections on Hume's Life', *Hume Studies* 29, no. 2 (2003): 338, 345–6, 350–1 and n. 83; Ryan Patrick Hanley, 'Hume's Last Lessons: The Civic Education "My Own Life"', *The Review of Politics* 64, no. 4 (2002): 682–3.

[105] On this point, see Ryan Hanley, Chapter 7, this volume.

Aristotle suggests that greatness of soul is a heroic virtue, and, surveying common usage of the term 'greatness of soul', he notes that many people consider Homer's Achilles and Ajax as magnanimous.[108] Hume likewise claims that greatness of mind is a 'heroic virtue'[109] and ascribes magnanimity to the warrior Ajax. But, anticipating Emerson, Hume suggests that the greatest magnanimous hero need not be a warrior. According to Hume, the philosopher Socrates was magnanimous,[110] and philosophers can be heroes just as much as warriors: 'Heroes in philosophy as well as those in war and patriotism have a grandeur…which astonishes our narrow souls'.[111] Hume implies that while warriors who lack benevolence might be magnanimous, more beneficent philosophers such as Socrates have a superior sort of magnanimity.[112]

As Hume defines it, greatness of mind is identical to great 'steady and well-establish'd pride'.[113] Great-minded individuals must have accurate self-conceptions and not believe themselves to be better than they are; their pride must be warranted by their merit.[114] Further, Hume indicates that only benevolent individuals can achieve the best sort of magnanimity. He contends that the 'courage and ambition' of magnanimous individuals, 'when not regulated for benevolence, are fit only to make a tyrant and a public robber'.[115] The best sort of magnanimous individual must in fact possess a wide array of virtues, including social ones. They desire fame and honour for the right reason—because they are virtuous.[116]

Like Emerson, Hume and Smith acknowledge that people often mistakenly tend to honour those who exhibit military power and wealth, even if they lack benevolence.[117] Like Emerson, Hume and Smith make it clear that those who receive less honour and fame might nevertheless be more magnanimous if they are more benevolent and better exhibit social virtues. What matters most to magnanimity is not receiving honour, but *genuinely* warranting that honour by being truly virtuous and seeking to contribute to others' happiness. As Smith writes, man desires 'not only praise, but praiseworthiness'.[118] Truly great-souled people can be largely indifferent to the applause or censure of the world, 'secure that, however misunderstood or misrepresented, we are the natural and proper objects of approbation'.[119]

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[106] Hume, *An Enquiry*, SBN 256–7.

[107] Corsa, 'Modern Greatness of Soul', 35–41.

[108] *Aristotle's Posterior Analytics*, trans. Jonathan Barnes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 97b16-25. For discussions of Aristotelian magnanimity as a virtue with Homeric roots, see Cordner, 'Aristotelian Virtue', 302–3; Curzer, 'A Great Philosopher's', 524–5. Here, we remain agnostic about whether Aristotle agrees with common usage, and himself attributes greatness of soul to Achilles and Ajax. Further, while Aristotle sees greatness of soul as a *heroic* virtue, we do not mean to imply that he necessarily sees it as a *warrior* virtue.

[109] Hume, *A Treatise*, SBN 599.

[110] Hume, *An Enquiry*, SBN 256.

[111] Ibid., SBN 252; Donald W. Livingston, *Philosophical Melancholy and Delirium*: *Hume's Pathology of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 47–8.

[112] This is a central conclusion in Corsa, 'Modern Greatness of Soul'.

[113] Hume, *A Treatise*, SBN 599.

[114] Hume, *An Enquiry*, SBN 314.

[115] Hume, *A Treatise*, SBN 604. For further support and discussion of this point, see Corsa, 'Modern Greatness of Soul', 37–40.

[116] Hume, *An Enquiry*, SBN 265–6 and 276.

[117] Hume, *A Treatise*, SBN 600–1; Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, New Edition (London: George Bell and Sons, 1875), 144.

Also like Emerson, Smith takes the view that magnanimous individuals need not pursue great wealth. In a Stoic vein, he suggests that even for a poor man's son, 'tranquility is at all times in his power', and he laments that the youth might give it up, and labour with 'fatigue of body and more uneasiness of mind' for the sake of wealth and a lifestyle that are 'in no ways preferable to that humble security and contentment which he had abandoned'.[120] Those who are not wealthy and have no higher education often end up in occupations that require overly simple, repetitive tasks,[121] while those who are wealthy often focus their time on acquiring more wealth or on enjoying the wealth they have;[122] in both cases they fail to become magnanimous. 'The minds of men are contracted and rendered incapable of elevation . . . and the heroic spirit is almost utterly exhausted'.[123]

Hume and Smith do not, like Emerson in his early sermon, appeal to Jesus Christ as their ideal exemplar of magnanimity, and instead appeal to the example of Socrates. Hume's account of magnanimity lacks the religious inflection that characterizes Emerson's. Nonetheless, all three philosophers broaden the scope of heroism, and suggest that being a warrior, or being wealthy, are not the only or the best ways to be magnanimous. They all suggest that the best magnanimous individuals must also exhibit social virtues. While Hume and Smith do not go as far as Emerson, in claiming that anyone could be magnanimous and heroic,[124] they do suggest that there are numerous paths to heroism.

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[118] Ibid., 164.

[119] Ibid., 164. For Smith this is also true of the mathematician and the scientist.

[120] Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* 260. For more on this similarity between Thoreau and Smith: Schliesser, 'Weekly Philo', Blog Post.

[121] Adam Smith, *Lectures on Justice, Police, Revenue and Arms*, ed. Edwin Canaan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), 255–6.

[122] Ibid., 257–8.

[123] Ibid., 259; Schliesser writes about a similar passage from the *Wealth of Nations*: Schliesser, 'Weekly Philo', Blog Post.

[124] Strikingly enough, this is the position of Smith's teacher, Francis Hutcheson: 'At present, we may take only this one [conclusion], which seems the most joyful imaginable, even to the lowest rank of Mankind, *viz*. That no external Circumstances of Fortune, no involuntary Disadvantages, can exclude any Mortal from *the most heroic Virtue* . . . Thus, not only the *Prince*, the *Statesman*, the *General*, are capable of *true heroism*, tho these are the chief Characters, whose Fame is diffus'd thro various Nations and Ages; but when we find in an *honest Trader*, the *kind Friend*, the *faithful, prudent Adviser* . . . the *tender Husband*, and *the affectionate Parent*, the *sedate*, yet *cheerful Companion*, the *generous Assistant of Merit,* the *cautious Allayer of Contention and Debate*, the *Promoter of Love* and *good Understanding* among Acquaintances . . . we must judge this character really as amiable as those' (Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue; in Two Treatises,* 2nd ed. (London: Printed for J. Darby, A. Bettesworth, F. Fayram, J. Pemberton, C. Rivington, J. Hooke, F. Clay, J. Batley, and E. Symon, 1726), 194–5).

4. Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau: Poverty and Wilderness

Another of Emerson's protégés, Thoreau, further broadens the scope of heroism. Like Hume, Thoreau suggests that philosophers can be just as heroic as Homeric warriors. Near the beginning of *Walden*'s chapter 'Economy', Thoreau distinguishes between professional philosophers and those who live the best sort of philosophical lives, writing: 'There are nowadays professors of philosophy, but not philosophers'.[125] In contrast to professors of philosophy, *true* philosophers must live lives of 'magnanimity',[126] their success in life must be 'manly', and they must—like Emerson's magnanimous, self-reliant individual—'not live merely by conformity'.[127] At the end of the same chapter, Thoreau quotes a poem written by Thomas Carew, which Thoreau suggests is relevant to his chapters as a whole, and which explicitly equates the 'heroic virtue' of figures such as Achilles and Hercules with 'magnanimity'.[128] Overall, Thoreau implies that 'true' philosophers, as opposed to the false philosophers who populate educational institutions, are just as great-souled and heroic as Homeric warriors, and have equally 'strong and valiant natures'.[129]

But Thoreau goes a step further, suggesting that everyday labourers, or at least those who engage directly with the natural world, such as farmers, can be heroic.[130] He draws numerous comparisons between outdoor labourers and mythological warriors such as Achilles and Hercules.[131] Whether the intention behind comparisons like these is to elevate those who work in nature, or to poke fun at and diminish mythological warriors, the effect is the same: farmers and warriors are levelled.[132] In the essay 'Walking', Thoreau remarks that the time in which he lives is 'the heroic age itself, though we know it not, for the hero is commonly the simplest and obscurest of men'.[133]

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[125] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience,* 13; Stanley Bates, 'Thoreau and Emersonian Perfectionism', in *Thoreau's Importance for Philosophy,* ed. Rick Anthony Furtak, Jonathan Ellsworth, and James D. Reid (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 14–15.

[126] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience,* 13.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience,* 58. Thoreau modernizes Carew's spelling and grammar: Thomas Carew, *Coelum Britannicum: A Masque,* in *The Poems of Thomas Carew*, ed. W. Carew Hazlitt (London: Chiswick Press, 1870), 217–18.

[129] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience*, 14. For discussions of the relation of Carew's poem to Thoreau's philosophy: Andrew J. Corsa, 'Henry David Thoreau: Greatness of Soul and Environmental Virtue', *Environmental Philosophy* 12, no. 2 (2015): 164–7; Thomas Woodson, 'Thoreau On Poverty and Magnanimity', *PMLA* 85, no. 1 (1970): 24-7; Philip Cafaro, *Thoreau's Living Ethics: Walden and the Pursuit of Virtue* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 48–50; Philip Cafaro, 'Thoreau's Virtue Ethics in Walden', *The Concord Saunterer* 8 (2000): 28–9.

[130] In Thoreau's description of the battle of ants, Thoreau compares one of the ants to Achilles, suggesting that we don't need to look to ancient epics to find examples of heroism (Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience*, 155–6).

[131] For two examples: ibid., 107 and 111.

[132] Ryan Hanley, 'Thoreau Among His Heroes', *Philosophy and Literature* 25, no. 1 (2001): 68.

[133] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience*, 273.

So how can a person become magnanimous? Thoreau suggests that there might be different requirements for different people. A small number of people might be able to live lavishly and magnificently and still be magnanimous, if wealth comes easily to them.[134] But for the majority of people to become magnanimous, they would need to lead lives of simplicity and perhaps voluntarily adopt poverty. Additionally, Thoreau maintains that, to simplify their lives, the majority of people must spend time in the wilderness, walking, farming, fishing, etc., and observing plants and animals. Only then can they learn to correctly look within, listen to their geniuses, and lead lives that are (there are echoes of the Stoics here) in accord with nature.[135]

Thoreau thus breaks with the tradition of the Scottish Enlightenment in whose political economy he finds the source of many contemporary ills. While the Scottish philosophers accept that individuals need not be wealthy to be magnanimous, they do not treat simplicity or poverty as necessary ingredients of a magnanimous life. Thoreau also takes a particularly American turn in emphasizing the importance of wilderness. Thoreau notes that to walk east, towards Britain and Europe, is to 'realize history and study the works of art and literature, retracing the steps of the race'.[136] Thoreau writes that he walks eastward 'only by force', because 'it is hard for me to believe that I shall find ... sufficient wildness and freedom behind the eastern horizon'.[137] In contrast, to walk west is to walk into the untapped wilderness at the heart of America—to walk 'into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure',[138] where only Native Americans live.[139] Thoreau's emphasis on the role that wilderness can play in helping to breed magnanimity is an emphasis on the potential of America over Britain.

Why must the majority of people live simply, and perhaps voluntarily adopt poverty, in order to become magnanimous?[140] Thoreau writes that, in contrast to those who are genuinely great-souled, the majority of Americans spend too much of their lives pursuing public recognition and commercial ends that are not truly important. Thoreau scorns, for instance, 'the spending of the best part of one's life earning money',[141] contending that we could successfully pursue what is genuinely important with far less: 'Superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only.'[142] Echoing Stoic themes, but with a Romantic twist, he claims that our possessions limit our freedom, and prevent us from doing what we would do if we genuinely listened to our geniuses. Thoreau was a fierce critic of the public institution of slavery. But this is not the only form that slavery takes, in his view. A farmer who thinks he owns a house might realize that, in fact, the 'house has got him', since it would be difficult to move or give up property even to pursue a dream; 'our houses are such unwieldy property that we are often imprisoned rather than housed in them'.[143] Nice possessions, he writes, are 'gold and silver fetters'[144] and many people have spiritually enslaved themselves to them: 'There are many keen and subtle masters that enslave both north and south . . . worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself'.[145]

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[134] Ibid., 14.

[135] While Hanley does not make this precise point, he does imply that, for Thoreau, magnanimity requires living in accordance with one's nature: Hanley, 'Thoreau Among His Heroes', 71.

[136] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience*, 268. [137] Ibid., 268. [138] Ibid., 268–9.

[139] In a 12 July 1917 piece commemorating the 100th anniversary of Henry David Thoreau's birth for the London *Times Literary Supplement*, Virginia Woolf insightfully compares Thoreau himself to Native Americans, both in his demeanour and also in the way he views nature: Virginia Woolf, 'Thoreau', in Rebecca Beatrice Brooks, 'Virginia Woolf on Henry David Thoreau', *The Virginia Woolf Blog* (blog), 14 August 2013, http://virginiawoolfblog.com/virginia-woolf-on-henry-david-thoreau. Yet Woolf seems to essentialize Native Americans as savages in a way that Thoreau does not; see Eric Schliesser, 'On Virginia Woolf on Thoreau Being a Counterpart of Emerson', *Digressions and Impressions* (blog), 21 June 2017, http://digressionsnimpressions.typepad.com/digressionsimpressions/2017/06/on-virginia-woolf-on-thoreau-being-a-counterpart-of-emerson.html.

[140] While Cafaro does not focus on the relation between simplicity and magnanimity, he claims that, according to Thoreau, there is a 'strong correlation between simplicity and the other virtues' (Cafaro, 'Thoreau's Virtue Ethics', 37). Cafaro provides support for connections between simplicity and the virtues of trust, honesty, and independence.

According to Thoreau, the best way to become magnanimous is to strive for: 'Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!'[146] He urges that '[n]one can be an impartial or wise observer of human life but from the vantage ground of what *we* should call voluntary poverty'.[147] If we live simply and adopt voluntary poverty, we will not need to work as hard to attain wealth, we will have the freedom to act and to stand up for what we believe in without the fear of potentially losing resources, and we could spend our time and energy on what is truly important.[148]

Years later, a fellow New Englander, William James, although disagreeing with Thoreau on many points, builds on Thoreau's claims about poverty in ways that can help to clarify Thoreau's thought.[149] James suggests that many people refrain from standing up for what they believe in and doing what they really want, out of fear of financial consequences.[150] James contends that voluntarily adopting poverty and freeing ourselves from concerns for wealth would enable us to better demonstrate moral courage and pursue what is most important to us.[151] James writes that 'the fear of poverty among the educated class is the worst moral disease from which our civilization suffers',[152] and he suggests that the educated class can learn how to live better by focusing on examples of people who lead superior lives without that fear of poverty, such as religious saints. Thoreau, likewise, seeks to make himself an example of this kind. By choosing to live in comparative poverty in the wilderness, and by writing about his experiences, Thoreau hopes that his example can help to metaphorically liberate his readers from their slavery to their possessions, to themselves, and to the societies to which they conform.[153] Instead of seeking to be a traditional philanthropist who gives money to the poor, he strives to be both a good example for others and a good person, 'going about the world in his own orbit, doing it good, or rather, as a truer philosophy has discovered, the world going about him getting good'.[154] In this regard, Thoreau seeks to correct the ills of capitalism by demonstrating the possibility of lives of great merit that do not embrace its norms.

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[141] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience*, 40.

[142] Ibid., 221.

[143] Ibid., 26.

[144] Ibid., 14.

[145] Ibid., 8; Schliesser, 'Weekly Philo of Economics', Blog Post.

[146] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience,* 65.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Corsa, 'Henry David Thoreau', 172. For a distinct but related discussion: Joshua Colt Gambrel and Philip Cafaro, 'The Virtue of Simplicity', *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 23 (2010): 96 and 98.

[149] Richardson notes that James's contentions about voluntary poverty resonate with Thoreau's views, and that both thinkers take poverty to offer the possibility of freedom: Robert D. Richardson, *William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006), 412. In his introduction to James's 'Moral Equivalent to War', Richardson suggests that James might have had Thoreau explicitly in mind when writing about voluntary poverty: William James, *The Heart of William James*, ed. Robert Richardson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 301.

[150] William James, *William James: Writings 1902–1910* (New York: Library of America, 1987), 333–4.

[151] Ibid.; Lee H. Yearley, 'The Ascetic Grounds of Goodness: William James's Case for the Virtue of Voluntary Poverty', *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 26, no. 1 (1998): 113–14.

While Adam Smith also bemoans the tireless pursuit of wealth in his society, and suggests that this pursuit can prevent one from becoming magnanimous,[155] Thoreau is singularly adamant in suggesting that the solution, even for the majority of wealthy individuals, is to adopt voluntary poverty. In this, Thoreau goes further than Emerson. In his essay 'Domestic Life', Emerson claims that 'the greatest man in history was the poorest', and writes that virtue and genius 'are best plain-set, set in lead, set in poverty'.[156] But Emerson is elsewhere very critical of philosophers such as Thoreau who argue in favour of poverty: 'Philosophers have laid the greatness of man in making his wants few; but will a man content himself with a hut and a handful of dried pease? He is born to be rich'.[157] Like Thoreau, Emerson is concerned that individuals might waste too much of their time and life striving to acquire wealth,[158] and he worries that our property might come to own us rather than the other way around.[159] But he remains convinced of the utility of wealth, in enabling an individual to travel, to have access to science and study, and to thereby 'do justice to his genius',[160] and he never insists, as Thoreau does, that voluntary poverty and a life of simplicity are necessary for the majority to become truly magnanimous.

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[152] James, *William James*, 334.

[153] Corsa, 'Henry David Thoreau', 169. For a related but distinct discussion: Mason Marshall, 'Freedom Through Critique: Thoreau's Service to Others', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 61, no. 2 (2005): 403 and 408.

[154] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience,* 53–4.

[155] See our discussion in section 3 above for the relation Smith draws between magnanimity and the pursuit of wealth. That discussion largely corresponds to Smith, *Lectures on Justice*, 255–9.

[156] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston and New York: The Jefferson Press, 1912), 112; Alexander C. Kern, 'Emerson and Economics', *The New England Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1940): 686.

[157] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 990–1; Birch suggests that this passage is 'undoubtedly aimed in part at Henry David Thoreau's experiment in subsistence living' (Thomas D. Birch, 'Toward a Better Order: The Economic Thought of Ralph Waldo Emerson', *The New England Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (1995): 393).

[158] Emerson, *The Works*, 111; Kern, 'Emerson and Economics', 686.

[159] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures,* 1005.

Thoreau further contends that as long as we stay in a society of people who live lavishly, it will be difficult to live simply.[161] It is too easy come to believe that one should possess the same resources as one's wealthy neighbours,[162] and people tend to fall into mental ruts, conforming to the lavish lifestyles common in their society: 'The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels…How deep the ruts of tradition and conformity!'[163]

Like Emerson and Fuller, Thoreau worries that individuals will naturally conform rather than look within, but Thoreau offers a novel solution. Thoreau proposes that we should periodically isolate ourselves from town/city life in the wilderness, even if we remain just a few miles from society. His idea is not that we should remove ourselves to an isolated location untouched by humans; he acknowledges that Native Americans live in what he considers wilderness, and he encountered other outdoor labourers in the woods near his cabin. Rather, he recommends we should periodically seek out places in nature where we can 'witness our own limits transgressed'[164] and 'learn what are the gross necessaries of life'.[165] This is the best way to break free from conformity.

Emerson, too, suggests that we must engage with and study nature in order to *correctly* look within ourselves and find the truth the over-soul makes possible.[166] According to Emerson, we study nature in part because of what it can teach us about our own minds and moral notions when we form analogies between the two.[167] For example, he suggests that it can be valuable to us, in coming to understand ourselves and the world, to think that 'an enraged man is a lion, [and] a cunning man is a fox'. Or again, he writes: 'Who looks upon a river in a meditative hour, and is not reminded of the flux of all things?'[168] In his view, 'wise men' can escape from commonly accepted falsehoods by turning back to nature and, like poets, reflecting on the most natural analogies they can draw between nature and their minds and morals.[169] Emerson proposes that 'the true philosopher and the true poet are one',[170] and 'the ancient precept "Know thyself," and the modern precept, "Study nature," become at last one maxim'.[171]

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[160] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 989, also 855–7 and 991; Kern, 'Emerson and Economics', 690; Birch, 'Toward a Better Order', 394.

[161] Corsa, 'Henry David Thoreau', 177. Additionally, Mooney notes that, according to Thoreau, when we are in towns and cities we experience too-clear expectations and social boundaries (Edward F. Mooney, *Excursions with Thoreau: Philosophy, Poetry, Religion* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 65).

[162] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience*, 27.

[163] Ibid., 217.

[164] Ibid., 213; Philip J. Cafaro, 'In Wildness is the Preservation of the World: Thoreau's Environmental Ethics', in *Thoreau's Importance for Philosophy,* ed. Rick Anthony Furtak, Jonathan Ellsworth, and James D. Reid (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 86–9.

[165] Ibid., 11; Corsa, 'Henry David Thoreau', 178.

[166] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 55–6.

[167] Ibid., 22 and 26.

[168] Ibid., 22.

[169] Ibid., 22–3.

5. Conclusion

Taking Thoreau, Emerson, and Fuller together as a composite, we conclude that the ideal sort of inquiry, which yields access to the (over-soul and) truth, requires both the correct sort of social interaction and the correct sort of interaction with and study of wilderness. While humans have 'a wild savage in us',[172] we also have an instinct towards a 'higher' social and civilized 'spiritual life',[173] and individuals with the best sort of magnanimity, who engage in the correct sort of inquiry, do not give in to one or the other. They offer an exemplary reconciliation of the wild and Dionysian (to use Nietzsche's terms) with the civilized and Apollonian and set themselves in order.[174] Neither the wildness of magnanimity nor the civility of benevolence is sufficient on its own. Perhaps some malevolent people could be magnanimous, as Hume and Smith allow, but the best sort of magnanimous life includes benevolence.

Taking these philosophers together, we can provide a robust picture of what Emerson means when he refers to the 'true philosopher'.[175] True philosophers must engage in the correct sort of inquiry which enables them to align with the over-soul. In their experimental way of living, they must be poets who study and directly engage with nature, and who let friends and geniuses inspire and change them. They must also have 'strong and valiant natures'[176] and possess an array of different virtues, including not only greatness of soul, but also 'independence', 'trust', and 'simplicity'.[177]

The Transcendentalists' notion of a 'true philosopher' resembles at a formal level a similar notion expressed by their Scottish Enlightenment predecessors. Throughout his work, Hume draws distinctions between 'true philosophy' and

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[170] Ibid., 36. In this passage and the discussion around it, Emerson also seeks to resolve the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy, anticipating later work by Heidegger and Nietzsche. Emerson appeals to the notion of the true philosopher in order to resolve this quarrel. Given the relation between the notion of the true philosopher and the notion of magnanimity, we might take Emerson to anticipate José Benardete's efforts to approach this quarrel by way of discussions of greatness of soul: José Benardete, *Greatness of Soul: In Hume, Aristotle and Hobbes, as Shadowed by Milton's Satan* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013).

[171] Ibid., 56.

[172] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience,* 281; Mooney, *Excursions with Thoreau*, 137–9.

[173] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience,* 143; Hanley, 'Thoreau Among His Heroes', 60.

[174] Thoreau, *Walden*, *Civil Disobedience*, 143 and 149–51; Hanley, 'Thoreau Among his Heroes', 60 and 64. For a distinct but nonetheless related discussion: Mooney, *Excursions with Thoreau*, 136–8.

[175] Emerson, *Essays & Lectures*, 36.

[176] Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience*, 14.

[177] Ibid., 13.

'false philosophy,'[178] and he likewise suggests that the true philosopher must exhibit a wide array of virtues,[179] including greatness of mind,[180] and must engage in the correct sort of philosophical inquiry.[181] Granted, the content of Hume's conception of ideal philosophical inquiry is radically different from that of the Transcendentalists, and not just with regard to the importance of religious concepts. But like Hume, the Transcendentalists draw connections between magnanimity and ideal philosophical inquiry. As argued above, Emerson suggests that a person could not achieve the best sort of magnanimity without engaging in the ideal sort of inquiry, which leads to alignment with the over-soul. Thus, ideal magnanimity and ideal inquiry are, on Emerson's account, jointly realized and mutually reinforcing, and the individual with the best magnanimity is nothing other than the true philosopher.

Taking Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau together, we can recognize how magnanimity might serve as a corrective for the veneration of wealth and the excessive valorization of public opinion. Where others might, faced with public disapproval, back down and refrain from standing up for what is true, Emerson suggests that magnanimous individuals can stand their ground. When others might refrain from expressing disagreement on fundamental matters with their friends out of fear of animosity, even though doing so might help both arrive at the truth, Fuller suggests that magnanimous friends will speak frankly with each other. And when others might make decisions based on financial considerations rather than on what is right, Thoreau suggests that magnanimous individuals will stay true to their natures. Magnanimous individuals publicly support policies which they know are right by listening to their geniuses, even if doing so leads to public disapproval and loss of economic status.

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[178] Exploring this distinction in Hume's thought is a central goal of Livingston's book, as he makes clear in *Philosophical Melancholy,* xi.

[179] Livingston provides a careful account of the virtues of Hume's true philosopher: ibid., 35–52. Hume is clear that a 'true philosopher' must be a 'man of virtue', who 'governs his appetites, [and] subdues his passions' (David Hume, *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*, Vol. I, A New Edition (London: Printed for T. Cadell, in the Strand: and A. Donaldson, and W. Creech, at Edinburgh, 1777), Mil 148). On 'true philosophy' and Thoreau as a philosophical prophet, see also Eric Schliesser, 'Philosophic Prophecy', in *Philosophy and Its History: Aims and Methods in the Study of Early Modern Philosophy,* ed. Mogens Laerke, Justin E. H. Smith, and Eric Schliesser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 209–36.

[180] Livingston, *Philosophical Melancholy,* 47–9.

[181] What the 'correct' sort of inquiry is for Hume is also a key theme in Livingston's book.

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