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Graham Solomon

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GRAHAM SOLOMON

The “great-souled man” was first described in detail in Book iv of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. Simon Blackburn concisely summarizes Aristotle’s portrait of this “lofty character”: “The great-souled man is of a distinguished situation, worthy of great things, ‘an extreme in respect of the greatness of his claims, but a mean in respect of the rightness of them’, perfectly virtuous, good at conferring benefits but ashamed of receiving them, neither humble nor vain. The combination involves proper pride or magnanimity.” Such men will enter politics with the aim of preserving justice and working for the good of society, or they will exhibit great personal courage in battle, or, more generally, they will aim at virtuous action at all times, even when faced with painful choices and life-threatening circumstances. Historians disagree about whether Aristotle held that the great-souled man is motivated in part by a desire to be admired by others, but certainly he held that the great-souled man was capable of performing great and virtuous actions that would be admired.¹

By the mid-eighteenth century, greatness of soul could be found in much less distinguished situations. Consider, for example, Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*. Tristram attributes greatness of soul to his mother for wanting to give birth to him under the care of a midwife rather than a doctor. His father thinks that turning down a large purse of money offered in exchange for naming one’s son Judas is an act of greatness of mind. And Tristram says his friend Jenny exhibited greatness of soul by purchasing a much less expensive piece of silk than the one she initially wanted, deferring to Tristram’s unvoiced but

obvious judgment.² For an example from the nineteenth century, consider the following passage from the novel *The Wrecker* (1891) by Robert Louis Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne. The narrator, a wealthy young American, is slumming as a bohemian art student in the Latin Quarter of Paris: "I always looked with awful envy . . . on a certain countryman of my own, who had a studio in the Rue Monsieur le Prince, wore boots, and long hair in a net, and could be seen tramping off, in this guise, to the worst eating-house of the quarter, followed by a Corsican model, his mistress, in the conspicuous costume of her race and calling. It takes some greatness of soul to carry even folly to such heights as these."³ There the character's greatness of soul seems to involve an ability to ignore or overlook or misinterpret the opinions others might have of him.

While the phrase "greatness of soul" or "greatness of mind" is not commonly used nowadays,⁴ the Latin form "magnanimity" is still in use in ordinary, everyday, reasonably educated discourse. And occasionally "high-mindedness" is used. The capacity to make magnanimous gestures is still widely felt to be a virtue. "Magnanimity" nowadays refers to a mix of unselfishness, generosity, the capacity to rise above petty feelings of resentment and revenge, and more generally and vaguely to a kind of nobility of heart and mind. These are features that Aristotle would recognize. But, it seems to me, we are prepared to apply the term to a far wider class of people than Aristotle would. Magnanimity is nowadays thought to be a virtue that can be exhibited by almost anyone.

The first extended discussion in English-language philosophy of the concept of greatness of soul or mind is in David Hume's *Treatise* III iii 2, a section titled "Of greatness of mind." Hume's discussion contributed to a domesticated and democratized understanding of the concept, a more serious ancestor of the concept found in *Tristram Shandy*⁵ and *The Wrecker*.

Donald Siebert argues in the chapter "In Search of the Hero of Feeling" in *The Moral Animus of David Hume*⁶ that after the initial exploration of the concept in the *Treatise*, Hume eventually settled in *The History of England* for an analysis of greatness of mind or soul as a combination of being above one's own misfortunes and being sympathetically responsive to the misfortunes of others. Siebert does not discuss Hume's relation to Aristotle, but we can see that Hume shares Aristotle's idea that one's greatness of soul has to do with a proper or healthy pride in one's accomplishments. Pride, for Hume, depends on sympathy; and, as we shall see, greatness of soul for Hume can arise from a proper balance of sympathy with and comparison to the fortunes and misfortunes of others, a state of "undisturbed philosophical tranquillity." And in fact Hume is rather skeptical that military heroism is something that, except in special circumstances, ought to be socially valued and admired. He would never agree that greatness of soul arises only from pride in one's military courage and heroism.

Donald Livingston, in *Philosophical Melancholy and Delirium*,⁷ argues persuasively that in the *Treatise* and later writings, Hume was centrally and necessarily concerned with greatness of mind. For Livingston, one of Hume's primary goals in the *Treatise* and *Enquiry* is to argue that there is a fundamental distinction between true philosophy and false philosophy, between true philosophers and false philosophers. True philosophy ends up with wisdom, which is an appropriate regard for common opinion, whereas false philosophy either ends up in melancholy and despondency about our inability adequately to justify common opinion, or ends up in delirious enthusiasm about a supposed ability to transcend common opinion. As Livingston sees it, for Hume, greatness of mind, characterized as Siebert has done, is a necessary characteristic of the true philosopher. No true philosopher can lack greatness of mind.

In my view, Hume's interest in the virtue of greatness of mind or soul was a long-standing one, an interest he had well before he started working seriously on the *Treatise*. We can find it in the earliest of his surviving letters. I shall discuss when and where the concept first appears in his writings and trace it through the *Treatise* and some later writings. I shall also connect his discussion with classical sources and with the writings of various major and minor literary figures and journalists of his day. Placing his discussion in the context of these sources enables us to see which ideas about, and which examples of, greatness of mind were circulating in his day, and so might have been expected by him to have been in the minds of his readers. Hume was very aware of, and his writings are filled with references to, more or less contemporary literature and journalism.⁸ Philosophy for him, even at its most abstract, was always deeply interconnected with more broadly literary and journalistic kinds of writing.

The earliest of Hume's surviving letters was written when he was sixteen to his friend Michael Ramsay.⁹ That letter tells us something of Hume's psychological state as a sixteen-year-old living in the country at his parents' home after some years at university in Edinburgh. It also contains significant clues about texts he read and others he may well have read as he began to work out the themes that eventually crystallized in the *Treatise*. He depicts himself as aspiring to live up to a Stoic-influenced ideal described by Cicero and Virgil, and the possibility of achieving tranquility through a kind of psychological detachment or disengagement from daily events, a detachment purportedly attainable through private contemplation and study. He writes that he wants to "live like a King pretty much by myself" and so "attain Greatness & Elevation of Soul."

Hume told Ramsay that he had been "confind to my self & Library for Diversion," mixing philosophy and poetry, "w^{ch} change is not unpleasant nor disservicable neither; for what will more surely engrave upon my mind a Tusculan Dispute of Cicero's de ægritudine lenienda than an Eclogue or Georgick of Virgils." For Hume, Cicero and Virgil agree on certain essentials:

“in peace of mind, in a Liberty & Independancy on Fortune, & Contempt of Riches, Power & Glory.” The following lines from Virgil’s *Georgics* (Book 2, lines 467 ff.), says Hume, “come nothing short of the Instruction of the finest Sentence in Cicero” (from John Dryden’s well-known and popular 1697 translation):

But easie Quiet, a secure Retreat,
 A harmless Life that knows not how to cheat,
 With homebred Plenty the rich Owner bless,
 And rural Pleasures Crown his Happiness.
 Unvex’d with Quarrels, undisturb’d with Noise,
 The Country King his peaceful Realm enjoys:
 Cool Grots [grottoes], and living Lakes, the Flow’ry Pride
 Of Meads, and Streams that thro’ the Valley glide;
 And shady Groves that easie Sleep invite,
 And after toilsome Days, a soft repose at Night.¹⁰

Hume quoted in Latin, though, not from Dryden, and likely by memory since he left out the second line of the original. But Hume’s self-description as a “King” is obviously close to Dryden’s “Country King,” interpreted in terms of spiritual or intellectual wealth. Indeed, Hume’s general attitude may well be informed in part by Dryden’s preface. As the attentive reader of that letter will see, several of Dryden’s concluding remarks are clearly echoed in Hume:

Virgil seems to think that the Blessings of a Country Life are not complete, without an improvement of Knowledge by Contemplation and Reading. . . . ’Tis but half possession not to understand that happiness which we possess: A foundation of good Sense, and a cultivation of Learning, are requir’d to give a seasoning to Retirement, and make us taste the blessing. . . . Wherever inordinate Affections are, ’tis Hell. Such only can enjoy the Country, who are capable of thinking when they are there, and have left their Passions behind them in the Town. Then they are prepar’d for Solitude; and in that Solitude is prepar’d for them [But easie Quiet, a secure Retreat, A harmless life that knows not how to cheat].¹¹

Hume claims in his letter that he has achieved “in great measure” the recommended “pastoral and Saturnian happiness.” He claims to “live like a King pretty much by my self; Neither full of Action nor perturbation.” But he is uncertain that it will last: “This State however I can forsee is not to be rely’d on; My peace of Mind is not sufficiently confirmd by Philosophy to w’stand the Blows of Fortune; This Greatness & Elevation of Soul is to be found only

in Study & contemplation, this can alone teach us to look down upon humane Accidents."

Hume mentions Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*, and that is likely the main source for his youthful understanding of greatness of soul.¹² Even a quick read of the *Tusculan Disputations*, or of Cicero's *On Duty*, shows the importance of greatness of soul for Cicero. In his version, it involves a disdain for more than the bare necessities of food, clothing, and money, and a willingness to perform deeds which are not only good but also dangerous and difficult. The great-souled man never allows pride or desire for fame to lead him to make rash decisions. He does not take pride in success, nor is he despondent at failure. Greatness of soul, according to Cicero, can occur as easily among men in civil affairs (politicians) as among military leaders. One of Cicero's main lines of argument is intended to promote greatness of soul as a virtue for politicians by stressing its necessity in matters of civil government.

In the *Tusculan Disputations*, Cicero points to several examples of soldiers who exhibited greatness of soul, and he also points to Socrates. He says of Socrates that "influenced by these and similar reasons [to do with beliefs about immortality] Socrates sought out no advocate, when on trial for his life, and was not humble to his judges, but showed a noble obstinacy derived from greatness of soul, not from pride."¹³ Note that for Cicero, greatness of soul is distinct from pride.

In the *Treatise* there is a minor variant of the phrase "Greatness & Elevation of the Soul" used in the letter to Ramsay. In *Treatise* III iii 2, titled "Of greatness of mind," Hume discusses "the character of greatness and elevation of mind," in order to demonstrate "that all those great actions and sentiments, which have become the admiration of mankind, are founded on nothing but pride and self-esteem . . . whatever we call *heroic virtue*, and admire under the character of greatness and elevation of mind, is either nothing but a steady and well-establish'd pride and self-esteem, or partakes largely of that passion." Hume is after much the same point as Aristotle: pride, but not mere empty vanity, underlies that which is admired as greatness of mind. And of course he is implicitly criticizing those Christians who regard pride as a sin but nevertheless praise greatness of mind.

One of his main examples in the *Treatise* is a well-known episode in the life of Alexander the Great, certainly a man of the world rather than a Virgilian contemplative. Alexander was often used as an example of the heights one could reach with "greatness of soul." For example, Plutarch in his essay "On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander" says, "Was, then, Alexander ill-advised and precipitate in setting forth with such humble resources to acquire so vast an empire? By no means. For who has ever put forth with greater or fairer equipment than he: greatness of soul, keen intelligence, self-restraint, and manly courage, with which Philosophy herself provided him for his campaign?" Plutarch later remarks in the same essay that Alexander "was more

magnanimous than Achilles; for Achilles gave back the body of Hector for a small ransom, but Alexander buried Darius at great expense; Achilles, when he had become reconciled, accepted gifts and recompense from his friends to requite him for ceasing from his wrath, but Alexander enriched his enemies by conquering them."¹⁴

Hume used Alexander as an example of someone who performed actions widely admired "under the character of greatness and elevation of mind," but which in Hume's view, are based on "nothing but pride and self-esteem." Hume paraphrased a passage from the French essayist Charles Saint-Évremond's "Judgment upon Caesar and Alexander" which mentions the Prince of Conde's admiration for Alexander's response when faced with troops threatening mutiny: "Go tell your countrymen, that you left Alexander compleating the conquest of the world," Alexander had retorted. The same passage from Saint-Évremond was paraphrased to illustrate "strength of mind" in a short essay by Eustace Budgell published anonymously in *The Guardian*, No. 31, Thursday, 16 April 1713.¹⁵ *The Guardian* was a well-known journal, the descendant of the *The Spectator* and *The Tatler*. Budgell argued that happiness depends on having the habit of virtue and a strength of mind sufficient to "keep it from being dependent upon others":

The surest means to attain that *Strength of Mind*, and independent Happiness I am here recommending, is A virtuous Mind sufficiently furnished with Ideas to support Solitude, and keep up an agreeable Conversation with it self. . . . a mind thus furnished feels a secret pleasure in the Consciousness of its own Perfection, and is delighted with such occasions as call upon it to try its force. . . . It is this Strength of Mind that is not to be overcome by the Changes of Fortune, that rises at the sight of Dangers, and could make *Alexander* (in that Passage of his Life so much admired by the Prince of *Conde*) when his Army mutinied, bid his Soldiers return to *Macedon*, and tell their Countrymen that they had left their King conquering the World; since for his part he could not doubt of raising an Army wherever he appeared. It is this that chiefly exerts itself when a Man is most oppressed, and gives him always in proportion to whatever Malice or Injustice would deprive him of. It is this, in short, that makes the virtuous Man insensibly set a Value upon himself, and throws a Varnish over his Words and Actions, that will at last command Esteem, and give him a greater Ascendant over others than all the Advantage of Birth and Fortune.

To "insensibly set a Value upon himself," as Budgell puts it, sounds very much like pride. It seems to be Budgell's view, though, that pride is the product of strength of mind, whereas Hume's is that greatness of mind is a balanced

pride. Perhaps Hume had this essay by Budgell in mind while writing *Treatise* III iii 2.¹⁶ At any rate, Hume wasn't the first to make use of Conde's admiration of Alexander the Great in a discussion of character.

However, unlike Conde and others, Hume is much more skeptical about greatness of mind as a military virtue. Military heroics are widely admired, but "Men of cool reflexion are not so sanguine in their praises of it. The infinite confusions and disorder which it has caus'd in the world, diminish much of its merit in their eyes." Those who praise military heroics, according to Hume, ignore or "paint out" the terrible consequences like "subversion of empires, the devastation of provinces, the sack of cities." He claims that "when we fix our view on the person himself, who is the author of all this mischief, there is something so dazzling in his character, the mere contemplation of it so elevates the mind, that we cannot refuse it our admiration." In Hume's view, our sympathy, at least among those who are not of "cool reflexion," is strongly engaged by this dazzling, charismatic character and overrides the pain and evil such ambitious heroes cause.

Alexander was occasionally used to illustrate vices as well as supposed virtues. Joseph Addison, for example, argued in *The Freeholder* (15 June 1716)¹⁷ that

As there is nothing which more improves the Mind of Man, than the Reading of antient Authors, when it is done with Judgment and Discretion; so there is nothing which gives a more unlucky Turn to the Thoughts of a Reader, when he wants Discernment, and loves and admires the Characters and Actions of Men in a wrong Place. Alexander the Great was so inflamed with false Notions of Glory, by reading the Story of Achilles in the Iliad, that after having taken a Town, he ordered the Governor, who had made a gallant Defence, to be bound by the Feet to his Chariot, and afterwards dragg'd the brave Man round the City, because Hector had been treated in the same barbarous manner by his admired Hero.

It is easy to imagine Hume agreeing with Addison's assessment of Alexander.

In *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Hume gives us an example of a character with greatness of mind who is very different from Alexander. Hume mentions Alexander again in the *Enquiry* in the discussion of greatness of mind in Section VII. Others mentioned there are the classical figures Medea, Vitellius, and Philip, each of whom exhibited courage and dignity. But Hume also argues that "undisturbed philosophical tranquillity, superior to pain, sorrow, anxiety, and each assault of adverse fortune" belongs in the same class of virtues with courage: "Conscious of his own virtue, say the philosophers, the sage elevates himself above every accident of life; and securely placed in the temple of wisdom, looks down on inferior mortals engaged in pursuit of

honours, riches, reputation, and every frivolous enjoyment." Hume notes that there are pretensions here, that such elevation is "far too magnificent for human nature." However, it carries a "grandeur" with it "which seizes the spectator and strikes him with admiration," a clear echo of Hume's suggestion in the *Treatise* that military heroes can "dazzle" us into admiring them. "The nearer," he writes, "we can approach to this sublime tranquillity and indifference" (which we should not confuse with "a stupid insensibility") "the more secure enjoyment shall we attain within ourselves, and the more greatness of mind shall we discover to the world. The philosophical tranquillity may, indeed, be considered only as a branch of magnanimity."

For Hume, then, the men of "cool reflexion," who in the *Treatise* were disinclined to praise heroes in pursuit of military glory, should praise the philosophical heroism of the pursuit of undisturbed tranquility, exhibited by (his examples) Socrates and Epictetus. And that sort of philosophical heroism is something that is within reach of ordinary persons going about their everyday business, not just brilliant philosophers. Hume introduces us, in Section IX of the second *Enquiry*, to Cleanthes, the ideal son-in-law, a character who is worthy, according to Hume, of championing "as a model of perfect virtue." Cleanthes exhibits honor and humanity; treats everyone kindly and fairly; has deep knowledge of men, law, and business; is a splendid conversationalist who combines wit and good manners; is gallant without affectation, knowledgeable but not a show-off; and finally, and most admirably, is cheerful, serene, and tranquil: "He has met with severe trials, misfortunes as well as dangers; and by his greatness of mind, was still superior to all of them." As Annette Baier rightly says, this is "a really incredible bundle of virtues."¹⁸ But whether or not this fictitious character is to everyone's taste (as a potential son-in-law, or even as a lawyer), he is Hume's prime example of the domesticated and democratized notion of greatness of mind. Cleanthes is not an ambitious soldier famous for his exploits in battle, nor an important politician or civic leader. His virtues are expressed in the realm of everyday life, in the private sphere.

When Hume wrote to Ramsay about striving for a philosophical detachment, a position from which he could "look down upon humane Accidents," it is likely, given his references to Cicero and Virgil, that he had in mind Stoicism of the sort Seneca described: "The difference here between the Epicurean and our own school is this: our wise man feels his troubles but overcomes them, while their wise man does not even feel them. We share with them the belief that the wise man is content with himself . . . [but] what we mean when we say that the wise man is self-content [is that] he is so in the sense that he is able to do without friends, not that he desires to do without them."¹⁹ It is less likely that Hume had in mind some sort of Epicureanism, but, if so, he would certainly have rejected it by the time he formulated the account of sympathy expressed in the *Treatise*.

There is a small trace of Epicurean doctrine in the *Treatise* which is worth examining in this context. In the "greatness of mind" section, Hume quotes a well-known and often cited fragment from Lucretius (*On the Nature of Things*, Book 2, lines 1–4). This fragment is, and was in Hume's day, often interpreted as a metaphorical presentation of the ideal Epicurean state of detachment from worldly concerns and anxieties.²⁰ In Dryden's 1685 translation:

'Tis pleasant, safely to behold from shore
The rowling Ship; and hear the Tempest roar:
Not that another's pain is our delight;
But pains unfelt produce the pleasing sight.²¹

The interpretation of these lines as a philosophical metaphor is found, for example, in Francis Bacon's well known 1625 essay *Of Truth*:

The poet that beautified the sect that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: *It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of Truth* (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), *and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests, in the vale below*; so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.²²

The more literal-minded Thomas Hobbes remarked on the feeling of pleasure involved in the Lucretian imagery, in a section of his *Human Nature* (1640) with the marginal heading "Of the passion of them that flock to see danger":

[F]rom what passion proceedeth it, that men take *pleasure to behold* from the shore the *danger* of them that are at sea in a tempest, or in a fight, or from a safe castle to behold two armies charge one another in the field? It is certainly, in the whole sum, *joy*; else men would never flock to such a spectacle. Nevertheless there is in it both *joy* and *grief*: for as there is novelty and remembrance of our own security present, which is *delight*; so there is also *pity*, which is grief; but the delight is so far predominant, that men usually are content in such a case to be spectators of the misery of their friends.²³

There are undoubtedly all sorts of reasons why people gather at tragedies and disasters: to pay a kind of respect, to offer support, to bear witness, as well

as to experience the delight noted by Hobbes. There is a lesson here for Epicureans, one made explicit by Dryden in his use of these same Lucretian lines in the preface to his play *Aureng-Zebe* (1675): “Neither am I form’d to praise a Court, who admire and covet nothing, but the easiness and quiet of retirement. I naturally withdraw my sight from a Precipice; and admit the Prospect be never so large and goodly, can take no pleasure even in looking on the downfall, though I am secure from the danger. Methinks there’s something of a malignant joy in that excellent description of *Lucretius*, . . . [the opening lines to Book 2].”²⁴

Surely Dryden is right to say that any pleasure associated with Epicurean detachment as characterized in the Lucretian image is “something of a malignant joy.” It is worth noting also that Dryden briefly discusses “greatness” after quoting Lucretius: “I am sure his Master *Epicurus*, and my better Master *Cowley*, prefer’d the solitude of a Garden, and the conversation of a friend to any consideration, so much as a regard, of those unhappy People, whom in our own wrong, we call the great. True greatness, if it be any where on Earth, is in a private Virtue; remov’d from the notion of Pomp and Vanity, confin’d to a contemplation of it self and centring on it self.” The suggestion that true greatness is to be found “in a private Virtue” is one with which the sixteen-year-old Hume might well have agreed. And it is surely a curious coincidence that the citation of Lucretius in the *Treatise* is in the discussion of “greatness of mind.”

Hume certainly knew Dryden’s play by the time he wrote the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, since he quotes from Dryden in Part X of the *Dialogues*. But it is not at all unlikely that Hume had read Dryden’s plays and poems, Bacon’s essay, and Hobbes’s book before completing the *Treatise*. It is easy to believe that by the time of the *Treatise* Hume would have been aware at least of the sorts of comments on the Lucretian version of Epicurean detachment made by Dryden.

Hume uses the passage from Lucretius to illustrate his account of how sympathy (fellow-feeling) and comparison of oneself to others govern our behavior. He is not directly commenting on the traditional interpretation. Hume observed that our reaction as witnesses to a ship “tossed by a tempest and in danger every moment of perishing on a rock or a sand-bank” depends on how close we are to the disaster. Our response is governed by sympathy and comparison: “if the idea be too faint, it has no influence by comparison; and on the other hand, if it be too strong, it operates on us entirely by sympathy, which is the contrary to comparison.” His account of the mechanics of our responses to witnessing other people in danger can be read as implicitly a judgment on the limits of our ability to attain Epicurean detachment from the cares of the world. There is a kind of involuntariness about some of our feelings that matches the involuntariness of some of our beliefs. We can’t choose not to feel, or not to believe—at least not for very long—about some matters. We respond sympathetically, and cannot help doing so, to the people we meet,

to fictional and historical characters in the books we read, and even to various objects of our idle thinking, dreaming, or imagining. We can get a feeling of pleasure, if safe on land, by comparing our situation with the imagined situation of seafarers in a storm. Sympathy with the feelings of creatures of our imagination is not strong enough to outweigh any pleasure gained by comparison of our real situation with an imagined one. But if we, safe on land, were to witness a ship come crashing to shore close by, our sympathy for the poor people on board would far outweigh any pleasure derived from comparison of our situation with theirs. In a natural way, we are sympathetically responsive to the misfortunes of others.

Hume doesn't explicitly address Hobbes's question of why people flock to see disasters. But, surely, for Hume, the sort of people Hobbes describes are deficient in sympathy: for them, any pleasure gained by comparison outweighs any feeling of pity through sympathy even in cases in which they observe actual and not merely imagined disasters. Similarly, for Hume, the sort of pleasurable detachment Epicureans encourage will result in inhumanely unsympathetic people, even if that sort of detachment is attainable at all. Hume would agree with Dryden that pleasure taken in such Lucretian situations is "malignant."

Aiming at Epicurean detachment would lead us to deny our natural responsiveness. In order to achieve tranquility, for Hume, one must come to terms with sympathy, and not merely deny its effects. Of course the failure of the Epicurean ideal follows from the earlier discussion of sympathy in Book II of the *Treatise*, well before the "greatness of mind" section. But the Epicurean ideal is never explicitly described and critiqued in the *Treatise*. The nearest Hume comes to explicit mention of it is in the use of that well-known central piece of Epicurean imagery to illustrate his discussion of the relations between sympathy and comparison, and their relations to pride and greatness of mind. But he did not need to use that piece of imagery for that purpose. Another example would have done as well. So perhaps he cited Lucretius in order to quietly indicate a rejection of Epicurean detachment and not merely to illustrate an argument about some other topic altogether.

Hume's account of greatness of mind or soul is part and parcel of his general picture of the workings of social and political culture. He belongs to a tradition of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in which pride, ambition, desire for fame, and perhaps what we now call self-esteem, are fundamentally important motivations for action. In that tradition, pride is held to be possibly morally problematic but nevertheless socially beneficial. It is an essential driving force for civilized culture. But for Hume and others it has to be tempered by something. For Hume, it is tempered by sympathy, which motivates a kind of care and concern for other people. Greatness of soul, for Hume, can be had by having the right, universalizable, kinds of feeling and emotion. We needn't

all perform and be seen to perform the sort of acts and deeds performed by Alexander the Great.

NOTES

My thanks to audiences at the University of Waterloo and the University of Western Ontario, and especially to David Fate Norton, Roger Emerson, and the referees, for comments and suggestions.

1. Simon Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 162. Blackburn, following one traditional account of the great-souled man, remarks that “with his slow step, deep voice, and level utterance, he does not appeal to everybody, but he represents Aristotle’s robust sense that the aims people have in life include an admiring reflection of themselves in the eyes of others.” Michel de Montaigne parenthetically notes in his *An Apology for Raymond Sebond* (trans. and ed. M. A. Screech [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987], 159) that “to be astonished by nothing is, for Aristotle, the attribute of greatness of soul.” That is certainly part of Aristotle’s characterization, but not the complete story. For a fuller account of (interpretations of) Aristotle on greatness of soul, see W. F. R. Hardie, “‘Magnanimity’ in Aristotle’s Ethics,” *Phronesis* 23 (1978): 63–79, and Stephen A. White, *Sovereign Virtue: Aristotle on the Relation Between Happiness and Prosperity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 247–271.

2. See pp. 72 and 78 of Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759–1767), ed. G. Petrie, introduction by C. Ricks (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985).

3. Robert Louis Stevenson, *Works*, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910), 39.

4. Roger Shattuck uses a slight variant in his *Forbidden Knowledge* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), in a discussion of a volume of translations from the Marquis de Sade. He remarks that “the translators seem to mean that for a few great souls Sade will bring immense liberation, and that other ordinary mortals will draw back in horror” (293). It is clear in the context that Shattuck is playing with irony, since he argues that Sade’s writings are socially harmful, though he doesn’t recommend censorship. Here the “great souls” are roughly those who recognize within themselves, and are willing to pursue, drives for control, depravity, and the infliction of pain. Shattuck is echoing a remark from Pascal he has quoted earlier in *Forbidden Knowledge* (106): “Evil is easy, its forms are infinite; good is almost unique. But there is a kind of evil as difficult to identify as what is called good, and often this particular evil passes for good because of this trait. Indeed one needs an extraordinary greatness of soul to attain it as much as to attain good” (*Pensées*, para. 526). That is a very long way from Aristotle.

5. Hume knew and liked Sterne. They met in Paris in 1764. But Hume remarked in a 1773 letter to William Strahan that “The best Book, that has been writ by any Englishman these thirty years (for Dr Franklyn is an American) is *Tristram Shandy*, bad as it is. A Remark which may astonish you; but which you will find true on

Reflection." See *Letters of David Hume*, ed. J. Y. T. Grieg, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), vol. 2, 269. James Boswell reported that after having read the first few volumes, Hume said, in 1762, "*Tristram Shandy* may perhaps go on a little longer; but we will not follow him. With all his drollery there is a sameness of extravagance which tires us. We have just a succession of Surprise, surprise, surprise." See *Sterne: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Alan B. Howes (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 147.

6. D. Siebert, *The Moral Animus of David Hume* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990).

7. D. Livingston, *Philosophical Melancholy and Delirium: Hume's Pathology of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

8. For another example of Hume's mixing of classical and contemporary sources, see my "Some Sources for Hume's Opening Remarks to *Treatise* I.IV.III," *Hume Studies* 16 (1990): 57–66.

9. Letter to Michael Ramsay, 4 July 1727, in *Letters of David Hume*, vol. 1, 9–11.

10. John Dryden, *The Works of Virgil*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. 5, ed. William Frost (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 202. The Loeb Classical Library prose translation by H. Rushton Fairclough is: "Yet theirs is repose without care, and a life that knows no fraud, but is rich in treasures manifold. Yea, the ease of broad domains, caverns, and living lakes, and cool vales, the lowing of the kine [cattle], and soft slumbers beneath the trees—all are theirs." *Virgil*, vol. 1 (London: Heinemann, revised edn., 1935), 149.

11. *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. 5, 143–144.

12. Livingston, *Philosophical Melancholy and Delirium*, places Hume in the tradition of Ciceronian humanism but does not examine relations between Cicero and Hume's writings prior to the *Treatise*. Hume does not mention Cicero in the discussion of greatness of mind in the *Treatise*.

13. *Cicero: Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J. E. King (London: Heinemann, 1945), Disputation I xxix, p. 85. Adam Smith remarked that Hume showed (but did not "parade") "great magnanimity" while facing death. See Smith's letter to William Strahan, 9 November 1776, often reprinted with Hume's *My Own Life*.

14. In *Plutarch's Moralia IV*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt (London: Heinemann, 1936), 389, 475–476.

15. J. C. Stephens, in his edition of *The Guardian* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982), cites the 1706 edition of *Veritables Œuvres de Monsieur de Saint-Évremond*, vol. 1, 227–228, for the paraphrased passage.

16. Roger Emerson noted in correspondence that while everyone read the *Spectators*, *Tatlers*, and *Guardians*, a student like Hume intending to study law might have done so with special interest had he known that Alexander Boyne, Professor of Scots Law (from 1722 to 1736 or 1737) had contributed or was rumored to have contributed to one or more of the journals. See Stephens's edition of *The Guardian*, 32.

17. *The Freeholder*, ed. James Leheny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

18. Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments: Reflections on Hume's Treatise* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 189. Also see her nice discussion of military heroics and the heroes of tranquillity, 210–212. One of the things she does in her book is to make clear how much Hume was concerned to describe and promote the domestic virtues and to deflate the military ones.

19. *Seneca: Letters from A Stoic*, trans. Robin Campbell (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 48. Hume mentions “having read many Books of morality, such as Cicero, Seneca & Plutarch” in the well-known unsent letter of March or April 1734 in which he described his troubled state (*Letters of David Hume*, vol. 1, 14). He would likely have read Seneca's letters.

20. As Howard Jones remarks in the concluding sentences of his *The Epicurean Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1989), 213.

21. *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. 3, ed. Earl Miner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 46.

22. *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, Douglas Denon Heath, vol. 6 (London: Longman, 1861), 378.

23. *Human Nature: or the Fundamental Elements of Policy*, ch. 9, sect. 19, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. William Molesworth, vol. 4 (London: John Bohn, 1840), 51.

24. *Dryden: The Dramatic Works*, ed. Montague Summers, vol. 4 (New York: Gordian Press, 1968), 83.