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WHAT IT TAKES TO BE GREAT: ARISTOTLE AND AQUINAS ON MAGNANIMITY

David A. Horner

The revival of virtue ethics is largely inspired by Aristotle, but few—especially Christians—follow him in seeing virtue supremely exemplified in the “magnanimous” man. However, Aristotle raises a matter of importance: the character traits and type of psychological stance exemplified in those who aspire to acts of *extraordinary excellence*. I explore the accounts of magnanimity found in both Aristotle and Aquinas, defending the intelligibility and acceptability of some central elements of a broadly Aristotelian conception of magnanimity. Aquinas, I argue, provides insight into how Christian ethics may appropriate central elements of a broadly Aristotelian conception of extraordinary virtue.

The magnanimous (or “proud”) man has not proved to be the most durably popular of Aristotle’s ethical portraits. It goes without saying that he is directly opposed to Christian humility. But modern dislike of him extends far beyond the ranks of believing Christians. He offends that spirit of equality—partly rooted, of course, in Christianity—which few of us can escape even if we try. — John Casey¹

The revival of virtue ethics in our time is largely inspired by Aristotle. Ironically, those who follow Aristotle’s ethical picture closely in other matters typically ignore if not flatly denounce his paragon of virtue: the great-souled or magnanimous² man. To those whose ethical perspectives are shaped by the Christian values of human equality, humility, and gratitude Aristotle’s paradigmatic character often seems closer to the nadir than the pinnacle of virtue. Even apart from Christian ideals, some argue, the magnanimous man seems hard to square with the rest of Aristotle’s own, pagan virtue ethic.

I submit that a rejection of Aristotelian magnanimity *in toto*, although understandable, is too hasty. Even Christians or those committed to traditionally Christian ideals should take another look at a broadly Aristotelian conception of extraordinary excellence. This for two reasons. First, for the sake of clarifying Aristotle’s ethical views generally. As noted, Aristotle’s ethics have proved quite fruitful for recent theorizing about virtue. At best, however, a gap is created in our understanding of Aristotle’s thought when we ignore his account of magnanimity; at worst, especially given magnanimity’s prominence, we are left with a *misunderstanding* or *distortion* of Aristotle’s ethics generally. Still,



Aristotle's account of magnanimity poses problems of content, coherence, and compatibility with the rest of his virtue ethics. I argue here that he has explicit and implicit resources to address some of these problems, but questions remain. Aristotle's thirteenth century Christian interpreter, Thomas Aquinas—notable (some would say, notorious) for the extent to which he preserves Aristotle's picture of magnanimity—adds not only a Christian cast to the discussion, but also illuminates further *Aristotelian* resources for resolving difficulties in Aristotle's view.

Second, the notion of *extraordinary excellence* is worth pursuing in its own right, for the sake of developing an adequate account of virtue, moral psychology, and practical reasoning as they are exemplified not only in "average" cases but also in the thought and action of those who aspire to extraordinary challenges. Aristotle addressed this notion in terms of "magnanimity"; I suggest that he contributes some important insights, albeit not always clear, complete, or ethically admirable from our perspective. Aquinas's account, again, provides additional resources for understanding how broadly Aristotelian insights into extraordinary excellence may be compatible with Christian values and virtues.

I do not attempt here to transform Aristotle's magnanimous man into a Christian saint, nor do I seek to defend or even try to make intelligible every element of Aristotle's—or Aquinas's—picture. My aim here is to examine both of their accounts of magnanimity in some detail, to seek to make intelligible and defensible some of the central elements of a broadly Aristotelian conception of extraordinary excellence, and thereby to shed light upon Aristotle's and Aquinas's virtue ethics more generally and contribute to the project of constructing a broadly Aristotelian virtue conception of ethics today.³

I

First, a partial sketch of Aristotle's picture of magnanimity in the *Ethica Nicomachea* (*EN*).⁴ His account of magnanimity immediately follows that of another grand virtue, magnificence, which is the disposition of giving on a large scale (generosity is the virtue of small-scale giving). Similarly magnanimity, concerned with honor on a large scale, is related to an unnamed virtue by which one exemplifies the right concern with honor on a small scale.

The subject matter of magnanimity, as initially mooted by Aristotle, appealing to its name, is "great things" (*megala*). The magnanimous man⁵ is rightly concerned with great things.⁶ What are "great things"? And just how is the magnanimous person related to them? Aristotle specifies the relation between the magnanimous man and great things as one of *worthiness*: the "magnanimous person, then, seems to be the one who thinks himself worthy of great things and is really worthy of them."⁷ Here Aristotle identifies two necessary conditions for S's being magnanimous:

- (i) S thinks himself worthy of great things (Self-estimation condition).
- (ii) S is worthy of great things (Greatness condition).

Failures to be magnanimous are identified as failures to satisfy one or both of these conditions:

	<i>Magnanimous</i>	<i>Pusillanimous</i>	<i>Temperate</i>	<i>Vain</i>
(i) (Self-estimation)	Y	N	N	Y
(ii) (Greatness)	Y	Y	N	N

(Fig.)

One whose view of his own (low) worth is greater than it actually merits is *vain*;⁸ one of great worth who thinks he is worthy of less than he is is *pusillanimous* (small-souled, *mikropsuchos*). The greater vice of the two, according to Aristotle, is pusillanimity: it is worse and it arises more often. One who accurately estimates his *low* worth is not magnanimous but *temperate*. Aristotle notes, analogously, that a small person may be attractive and well-proportioned (the analogue of lowly but temperate), but not actually beautiful (the analogue of great); for beauty requires a large body, as magnanimity requires actual greatness.⁹

We have an early clue in Aristotle's initial characterization of the pusillanimous person that (i) is the chief condition of magnanimity. Aristotle says of the pusillanimous person that he wrongly thinks he is worthy of less than he is, regardless of what he is actually worth: "and even if he is worthy of little, he thinks he is worthy of still less than that."¹⁰ One's stance towards one's worth, *whatever* it is, is most crucial. What is involved in satisfying (i)? Clearly it involves accurate self-knowledge, knowledge of one's own worthiness. If mere intellectual grasp were all that were involved, however, magnanimity would not be a moral, but an intellectual virtue.¹¹ But for Aristotle it is a moral virtue; as we shall see, it is the crown of the moral virtues, which characterizes the best persons. As I shall argue further in section II, it is pivotal to Aristotle's conception of magnanimity that right concern with one's own worth involves not only accurately grasping it, but also sufficiently esteeming and valuing it, desiring to fulfill its complete potential. We shall see what is involved in satisfying (ii) as we progress.

Aristotle also specifies his notion of "great things." They are related specifically to external goods, and especially to *honor*. "Worth is said to [make one worthy of] external goods," and the greatest of these is thought to be honor. So the magnanimous man has "one concern above all," which is honor. At the same time, paradoxically, he is said to count honors for little, even despising goods of fortune.¹² In any case, "the magnanimous person has the right concern with honor and dishonor."¹³

Aristotle's initial emphasis in his account of magnanimity is thus upon honor, which is evidently understood to be a kind of external good, i.e. the reception of acclaim and wealth. A further, more internal emphasis arises in Aristotle's account as well, however: that of *virtue* or excellence. The honor in view must be of the right sort:

The magnanimous person, then, is concerned especially with honors and dishonors. And when he receives great honors from excellent people, he will be moderately pleased, thinking he is getting

what is proper to him, or even less. For there can be no honor worthy of complete virtue; but still he will accept [excellent people's] honors, since they have nothing greater to award him.¹⁴

The honor in view, then, is that for which the virtue of the magnanimous man makes him worthy. Honor is the prize of virtue; only the good person is worthy of honors.¹⁵ The magnanimous person is the greatest in each virtue; magnanimity is a sort of crowning ornament (*kosmos tis*) to the virtues, "for it makes them greater, and it does not arise without them." It is impossible to be magnanimous without being fine or noble and good.¹⁶

Finally, Aristotle's magnanimous man (in contrast to the pseudomagnanimous person) is distinguished by his attitudes and actions, including the ability to handle properly the great honors and external goods that come his way. Virtue is needed to "bear the results of good fortune suitably."¹⁷ His distinctive attitudes toward others express his fineness: he is open in speech and action, unconcerned with praising or being praised, but laconic and ironic (*eirōneia*) toward those of lesser excellence, not seeking to display his superiority to them.¹⁸ Those with merely a semblance of magnanimity, on the other hand, become arrogant and wantonly aggressive, seeking to imitate the distinctive actions and attitudes of the magnanimous man, but doing what they please rather than what is fine. The magnanimous person is discriminating: he deems himself worthy of only great honors, and will disdain as beneath his worth being honored by just anyone or for something small. Unlike those who imitate him in despising or showing contempt for others, however, the magnanimous person justifiably despises other people, because his beliefs (about his worth and theirs) are true.¹⁹ The magnanimous man is eager to be superior in doing good: he does good but is ashamed to receive it. He wishes others always to be in his debt, and not he in theirs, because being a recipient is inferior and he wishes to be superior. He seems to remember only the good he does, not what he receives; and he likewise finds pleasure only in hearing of the good he has done.²⁰

II

There are admirable traits among those here depicted, but as a whole the picture is an unpleasant one . . . The passage simply betrays somewhat nakedly the self-absorption which is the bad side of Aristotle's ethics.

— W.D. Ross²¹

He is very nearly an English gentleman. — Alasdair MacIntyre²²

A number of objections have been raised against Aristotle's account. I shall consider several important problems here,²³ and attempt to answer them from within Aristotle's own, albeit in some cases, implicit resources. First, Aristotle's picture of magnanimity appears to suffer from problems of *coherence*, containing internal tensions and standing in tension with other elements of his virtue-ethical schema.

1. The relationship of magnanimity to external goods (including honor) is

problematic. The magnanimous person is said on the one hand to be concerned primarily with honor—indeed, according to one critic, obsessed with honor.²⁴ On the other hand he is said to count honor for little, to have a moderate attitude toward the goods of fortune, even to despise them. Are honors, then, to be sought or despised? Further, while initially Aristotle's magnanimous man seems to be characterized chiefly by his great claims to honor, as the portrait progresses superlative virtue rather than honor appears to take center stage. Is the magnanimous person's concern honor or is it virtue?²⁵ Does Aristotle actually tie one's moral status to one's reception of honors? Several interpreters have argued that these tensions in Aristotle's account are the result of his attempt to combine two very different "common beliefs" or *endoxa*, two competing, popular conceptions of magnanimity of his time: that of the Homeric hero who values greatness, grandeur, and honor; and that of the Socratic, moral hero who is indifferent to goods of fortune (including honor), and who values virtue supremely.²⁶ Aristotle's attempt is unsuccessful, on this view, because these are incompatible conceptions of ideal virtue.

Aristotle can go some distance towards resolving these tensions. First, the two tensions I have mentioned are linked. Aristotle is specific as to whether the magnanimous person seeks (or despises) honor, on the basis of its relation to virtue. In the *EE* Aristotle addresses the apparent inconsistency between one's being concerned above all with honor and yet disdaining the multitude and reputation. He makes a distinction: honor may be distinguished by who gives it—whether a crowd of ordinary men or those worthy of consideration; and by the ground upon which it is given—whether or not it is truly great.²⁷ Honor is to be despised when given by less than good people, or for less than excellent things, but sought from good people, for great things.²⁸ That is, whether or not honor is to be sought depends upon its relation to virtue—as exemplified by the giver and the recipient.

Second, relatedly, Aristotle appears to speak of *honor* in more than one way, or homonymously.²⁹ The magnanimous person's being concerned for "honor" may signify

- (RH) Concern for "being honored" (i.e. receiving honor), or
- (DH) Concern for "being honorable" (i.e. being worthy of or deserving honor, exemplifying virtue).

The objection that Aristotle's account reflects an unresolved tension between seeking honor and exemplifying virtue depends upon what seems to me to be an uncharitable—and unwarranted—reading of "honor" as univocally or exclusively signifying (RH). Aristotle certainly does construe "honor" in terms of (RH). Still, there is good reason to think that he also understands it in terms of (DH), and moreover considers the latter to be of primary, although less explicit importance. Throughout his account Aristotle distinguishes, both implicitly and explicitly, between receiving honor and being worthy of honor—not discounting the former, but emphasizing the latter as the primary concern of magnanimity. For example:

- (a) Both the magnanimous and the well-born and rich are honored, but only the good person is honorable (*timêteos*).³⁰
- (b) The counterfeit magnanimous and the truly magnanimous are distinguished by how they handle the results of good fortune (which, in the context, includes receiving honor): only with virtue can one bear them suitably (i.e. honorably; *emmelôs*).³¹
- (c) Honor has objective value as the proper reward of virtue, and the magnanimous person accepts it only when it is deserved, and from excellent people.³²

In each of these instances, explicit in (a) and implicit in (b) and (c), a distinction between (RH) and (DH) is presupposed, and honor construed as (DH) is primarily to be valued. Indeed Aristotle's contrast in (a) is *unintelligible* if he understands "honor" only in terms of "being honored."

Aristotle's use of "honor," then, reflects the homonymy we have noted, and we need not attribute to him a confusion or incoherence.³³ Moreover, by recognizing the homonymy we are able to understand this account as exemplifying Aristotle's characteristic strategy of affirming central elements of each of the competing *endoxa*, but on his own terms. In this case he is able to affirm the common belief that honor is the central concern of magnanimity. With the Socratic ideal he maintains that the magnanimous person's primary concern is to act honorably, to be worthy of honor; with the Homeric ideal he grants the objective value of honors received, yet only insofar as they rightly reward greatness in the virtues. The magnanimous person's moral status need be tied only to the latter, not the former. It is important to note, however, that, unlike later, e.g. Stoic views, Aristotle does not exclude received goods of fortune from ethical view. External goods and honors contribute to magnanimity.³⁴ Magnanimity is needed not only in order to be worthy of honor, but also to handle well honors that may be (and often are) received. Both honors deserved *and* honors received are in view and stressed.³⁵

2. There appear to be tensions between Aristotle's account of magnanimity and other features of his virtue-ethical schema. First, Aristotelian virtues concern passions and actions,³⁶ yet the subject matter of magnanimity is honors, which is neither. Moreover in this case the right exercise of the virtue is tied *necessarily* to an object external to the agent. How may this be accounted for in an Aristotelian virtue conception?

Aristotle provides little insight into how external objects may be related to action and passion within his virtue picture, especially in the case of magnanimity.³⁷ However, honor for Aristotle is related in great part to *action*. We have already seen that honor and virtue are closely related; honor and excellent action are also closely related, which should not be surprising in light of Aristotle's general metaphysical teleology according to which a virtue is perfected in action. Although Aristotle does not make it explicit in his account of magnanimity proper, he does indicate, I suggest, that the magnanimous person's concern for great things is broader than a concern to obtain his glorious deserts, but also

includes a concern to aim at extraordinarily excellent action. This concern becomes more explicit in Aristotle's portrayal of the vices related to magnanimity. According to Aristotle the goods of which the pusillanimous person deprives himself (i.e. "great things") because he does not esteem himself worthy of them, include not only external goods (Aristotle's stress thus far), but also "fine actions and practices." If the pusillanimous person knew his worth he would aim at these things rather than hold back, because "each person seeks what [he thinks] he is worth."³⁸ The vain, on the other hand, attempt exploits and pretend to honors of which they are not worthy, and clothe themselves with the trappings of honor unworthily.³⁹ Thus the great things about which the magnanimous person is concerned include both *deeds* and *deserts*—excellent actions and exploits as well as the proper rewards of those actions.⁴⁰

The picture emerges, then, that the actual greatness of personal worth, (ii), which the magnanimous person correctly perceives himself to possess, (i), comprises both (a) what is needed to accomplish acts of extraordinary excellence: those abilities, strengths, dispositions, and opportunities which would enable him to accomplish great exploits and fine actions, such as great heroism on the battlefield,⁴¹ which are rightly rewarded by the "trappings" of great honors; and (b) the disposition to handle such honors well when they are forthcoming. The magnanimous person, then, is *one who recognizes accurately and esteems sufficiently his ability to accomplish extraordinary actions of virtue, and handles well his success in accomplishing them*. On this picture, the rival Homeric and Socratic conceptions of magnanimity are in fact quite close: a stress on excellent acts (as opposed to merely deserts) on the part of the Homeric magnanimous person renders him very like the Socratic magnanimous person who excels in virtue, since on Aristotle's theory virtue is exemplified essentially in excellent action.

Another tension, between Aristotle's account of magnanimity and his general picture of virtue as a *mean*, is exemplified in an apparent conflict between the two necessary conditions for magnanimity (the self-estimation (i) and greatness (ii) conditions). While (i) may plausibly be construed as a mean, viz. a mean state of discernment or perception, (ii)—by its built-in extreme condition—does not obviously fit Aristotle's framework of virtues as means or intermediate states. Indeed Aristotle admits: "The magnanimous person, then, is at the extreme in so far as he makes great claims. But in so far as he makes them rightly, he is intermediate; for what he thinks he is worthy of reflects his real worth."⁴² It would seem to be more consistent with Aristotle's general virtue picture to restrict the subject matter of honor in general to the operation of a single virtue, where the virtuous mean constitutes a reasonable response to *all* honors, whether great or small, and leave greatness out of the picture entirely.⁴³

Aristotle is not of much explicit help here, but he has some room for response. First, negatively, an overly simple construal of Aristotle's doctrine of the mean as an intermediate condition sits uncomfortably with others of his virtues as well.⁴⁴ Aristotle's conception of the straightforward passionate virtue of courage, for example, involves a relationship between two passions rather than being simply an intermediate condi-

tion in the expression of one.⁴⁵ Justice, like magnanimity, but unlike the other moral virtues, is tied to external states of affairs rather than to means of action or passion relative to the agent.⁴⁶ Second, magnanimity is not the only virtue that builds in an external greatness condition: so also does the other grand virtue, magnificence. Indeed, it is this very respect that, for Aristotle, primarily distinguishes these extraordinary virtues from the ordinary. The important question, then, is how actual greatness could be required for the exemplification of an Aristotelian moral virtue. Aristotle provides no further insight.

On the one hand, it does seem correct to say that the person of extraordinary virtue—by virtue of being extraordinary, as it were—must possess greater capabilities and opportunities for greater deeds. On the other hand, if this is granted, the relationship between the grand, extraordinary virtues and the rest of the moral virtues comes into question. For example, according to Aristotle's doctrine of the unity or connection of the virtues, one must exemplify all of the virtues in order to exemplify any of them. But if magnanimity is a moral virtue on a par of order with the others, and if only a supreme few individuals are magnanimous, then it follows that only the supreme few exemplify *any* of the virtues. To fail to be magnanimous would be to fail to be virtuous. However, Aristotle clearly treats magnanimity differently from other virtues in this respect.⁴⁷ It is possible to fail to be magnanimous and yet to be virtuous—for the one who assesses his lower worth correctly exemplifies the core virtue of temperance, and thus the rest of the moral virtues.⁴⁸ How then do we characterize the difference between magnanimity and other virtues?

One important difference between magnanimity and the other virtues is that magnanimity appears to be a second-order, meta-virtue which is related to the other, first-order virtues as, in Aristotle's terms, a kind of adornment which applies when each of the other virtues is greatly exemplified.⁴⁹ Along this line, the relationship between magnanimity (as extraordinary virtue) and ordinary virtue has been compared to that between *supererogation* and *obligation*.⁵⁰ Thus, Sherman suggests, failure to exemplify magnanimity may not be like (blameworthy) failing to exemplify courage, but instead like exemplifying courage yet failing to do so with charm or grace (thus being less than great, but not being vicious or blameworthy). Magnanimity on this view is a *style* of virtue that supervenes upon its complete action- or passion-complement.⁵¹ If this is correct, Aristotle could hold to the unity of the virtues at the *ordinary* level, while reserving a further level of *extraordinary* virtue for an ethical elite.

Is this Aristotle's picture of magnanimity? It seems so, in part. Aristotle identifies magnanimity as a crowning virtue, which makes the other virtues greater. Moreover, the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary virtue seems consistent with Aristotle's assignment of blame regarding failures of magnanimity. In the case of the temperate person, who fulfills condition (i) of magnanimity, but not (ii), his low self-estimation is accurate, commensurate with his low worth. According to Aristotle he is "not to be blamed," unlike one who fails to exemplify one of the other moral virtues. Indeed, rather, he is similar to the magnanimous: he has the potential for magnanimity, for should his personal

worth increase, his accurate self-esteem would increase commensurately and he would aim at the things of which he is worthy.⁵² Since he is virtuous without being magnanimous, magnanimity cannot be *necessary* to virtue. Thus magnanimity is not required for a virtuous life. While other virtues are necessary (but not sufficient) for magnanimity, magnanimity is an extraordinary virtue, exemplified only by those who are not only otherwise virtuous, but also possess outstanding gifts and opportunities.

According to Aristotle pusillanimous people, who fulfill condition (ii) of magnanimity, but not (i), whose low self-esteem is incommensurate with their great worth, seem hesitant rather than foolish (as are the vain).⁵³ From this it may appear that Aristotle does not wish to blame them, either. This is not the case: their vice is actually worse than that of vanity; it is more opposed to magnanimity. Why is this? Because the pusillanimous fail to live up to their potential. It is evident that Aristotle's general project with respect to magnanimity is to *specify the virtue by which particularly gifted and good people may live up to their full potential*. Pusillanimity directly subverts this objective, while vanity fails in a different way, afflicting those who do not even have the potential for greatness. Both the temperate and the pusillanimous are potentially magnanimous in the sense that they each meet one of the criteria. Pusillanimity, however, involves a moral failure. If one actually possesses outstanding gifts and opportunities, one is blameable for not exercising them in great ways: one's lack of self-perception is *ethically defective*, since magnanimity involves not just perceiving one's gifts but fully esteeming them, desiring to exemplify them in action to the fullest extent. The latter is what distinguishes magnanimity as a moral, rather than an intellectual virtue.⁵⁴

However, we need to clarify further. First, while magnanimity is a second-order virtue it is incorrect to characterize it as *supervening* upon the other virtues. The exact relationship between magnanimity and the other virtues is left unclear by Aristotle, who simply identifies magnanimity as "a sort of" crown or adornment to the virtues. A supervenience relation, however, would entail that, necessarily, if one had greatness in all the virtues one would be magnanimous.⁵⁵ What Aristotle specifies, however, is only that greatness in all the virtues is a necessary condition for magnanimity; he does not indicate that it is sufficient. Indeed, that it is *not* sufficient is indicated by the fact that Aristotle does not treat magnanimity *solely* as a second-order virtue, but *also* treats it as a particular virtue concerned with a specific subject matter (great things, honors).⁵⁶ Magnanimity requires more than excellence in all other virtues; it also requires extraordinary capacities and opportunities for, and the ability to handle rewards resulting from, *extraordinary* actions. It appears to be Aristotle's view that one may *excel* in other virtues without possessing *extraordinary* gifts and opportunities. One may be virtuous or morally excellent in general; but to be magnanimous one must *also* excel in the use of what is extraordinary. This sets magnanimity (with magnificence) apart from Aristotle's other moral virtues, which are first-order virtues only. Unfortunately Aristotle provides no further account of how these two types of virtue are related to each other.

A second clarification: while we may think of ordinary virtue as

“obligatory” (i.e. necessary) for the virtuous, extraordinary virtue, however it may be construed, fits ill with the concept of supererogation. For while magnanimity is not expected of all good persons, it is nevertheless not supererogatory for those who possess the requisite gifts and opportunities; for them, it is required.

III

Aristotelian magnanimity faces problems not only of coherence, but also of *content*.

1. The magnanimous person appears to have offensive attitudes toward others. I shall concentrate on the objection that Aristotle’s magnanimous person is disdainful and contemptuous of other people.⁵⁷ Indeed, according to the account in *EE*, “it seems characteristic of the magnanimous man to be disdainful.”⁵⁸ He is concerned with being honored only by excellent people, and he despises the inferior. The difference between the true and the counterfeit magnanimous person is not that the counterfeit despises others while the magnanimous does not; both are disdainful, but only the truly magnanimous is justifiably so.

On the other hand, we have seen that the estimation of persons in view here regards primarily their exemplification of objective worth, especially virtue. The magnanimous person discriminates on the basis of *virtue*—his own and others: esteeming virtue and despising vice. His attitude is not simply one of superiority; rather his conviction is that virtue should be honored as superior, wherever it is found. Insofar as he exemplifies virtue, he is deserving of honor, and similarly for others. Indeed, the mark of the counterfeit magnanimous person is that he has contempt for *everyone* else, thinking himself to be superior to all, and able to do whatever he pleases.⁵⁹ His “superiority” is neither one of virtue, nor does he recognize virtue in others. He confuses the proper discrimination of the magnanimous with rank prejudice.

Is the esteeming of virtue and despising of vice objectionable? Surely not, in principle; without some such estimate no ethical discrimination is possible. I suggest that what we find objectionable in Aristotle is rather the apparent absence of any *additional*, balancing notions of respect for the worth or dignity of a human being simply *qua* human being—a basic level of respect for all, even ethically inferior human beings—and of the guiding value of positive care and concern for all. Such notions have a different provenance, however; they arise principally from the biblical vision of each human being’s possessing dignity as created in the image of God. Those of us who hold to a view of human equality thus face a question Aristotle didn’t, as to how different levels of estimating worth—*qua* human being and *qua* virtuous—may relate. Indeed the question strikes near the heart of the distinction between an ethics of virtue and other ethical theories: how may the esteeming (or despising) of persons with regard to their excellences (which will inescapably be unequal) be held consistently with a conviction of their equal worth as human beings?

2. Finally, the Aristotelian magnanimous person seems to have objectionable attitudes towards himself. He appears to be self-absorbed.⁶⁰ His motive for acting appears to be a desire to exemplify his great worth. But such manifest consciousness of his own great worth and his desire to exemplify it in action vitiates its very excellence.

To evaluate this objection we should first consider Aristotle's more general conception of the virtuous person's motivation in choosing an action, and then, assuming that we consider such a picture to be acceptable, seek to identify the further, putatively objectionable elements of the magnanimous person's motivation. Aristotle's view seems to be that virtuous motivation enters the practical thought of the virtuous person at two levels. On the level of *first-order practical deliberation* ("What shall I do?"), Aristotle requires that the virtuous person choose the virtuous act "for itself," or "for its own sake" (*di' auta*).⁶¹ This requirement may seem priggish or overly self-conscious if it is construed as demanding that the virtuous (say, generous) person choose the virtuous act *qua* virtuous act, i.e. having the *thought*, "This is a generous act," or "I shall do this because it is the generous thing to do." However, it need not be so construed. What is required by Aristotle, rather, may be satisfied by these conditions: that the generous person, *S*, choose the act, *G*, for one (or more) of *R* reasons (e.g. "He needs the money"), where *R* reasons express a range of considerations appropriate to the virtue of generosity. That *S* is generous explains why she is aware of such considerations in the situation (why they are salient to her), why she takes *G* to be appropriate, and why she's motivated to perform it. *G*, taken in this sense, is the generous thing to do, and *S* does *G* "for its own sake"—i.e. for the right reason(s), *R* (and not, e.g., under compulsion, in order to manipulate someone, buttress *S*'s reputation, etc.).⁶² *S*'s generosity explains why *S* recognizes *G* as appropriate and performs it; one need not require that *S* be motivated by consciously having a certain thought, e.g. that *G* is a generous act.

There is nothing overly self-conscious about such a picture. However, the problem may seem to resurface in another of Aristotle's characterizations of the virtuous person's motives, where he insists that virtuous actions are done for the sake of the fine or noble (*to kalon*). "Actions expressing virtue are fine and aim at what is fine."⁶³ Fineness is a property of virtuous acts which the virtuous person apparently recognizes, and this recognition seems to provide him with a distinctive, further reason to perform them. Need this recognition provide motivational content to the virtuous person's first-order practical deliberation ("To stand firm here would be a fine action, so I will do it")? In *EE* Aristotle distinguishes between the fully virtuous person (*kalokagathos*), and the (merely) "good" (*agathos*) person. The former distinctively values virtuous actions because they are fine. As Broadie and Kenny argue, however, the distinction concerns, not the content of the agents' practical deliberation—both choose the virtuous act for its own sake—but the content of their *second-order practical reflection*, e.g. when asked about the *point* of being virtuous.⁶⁴ The fully virtuous person is reflective: he has thought about what he wants to be, he recognizes in his planning the supreme value of the virtuous life itself, and he chooses such a life on

that basis, while the merely good person values virtuous actions because “it pays”—because of the natural goods such actions make possible. Aristotle holds generally that desire for what is fine, and revulsion towards what is shameful, is distinctive of the virtuous person.⁶⁵ Thus reflection about the fineness (or shamefulness) of goods or ends will provide the reflective, fully virtuous person additional reason to perform (or avoid) them, i.e. to be virtuous generally. Such reflection, of course, will *influence* his first-order deliberation as well: it will fine-tune his perception of such goods or ends as they are exemplified in practical situations, and thus make additional ethical considerations salient to him in his practical deliberation. But, again, it need not determine the content of such deliberation in an offensive way.

Merely good persons, then, in Aristotle’s view, may be quite unreflective about their view of virtue and its exemplification. Fully virtuous persons, however, are rightly reflective. Indeed the *EN* itself is an example of reflective ethical thinking for virtuous persons concerning the nature and point of virtue and the good life. Note that such reflection by the virtuous person will not only involve his considering which goods or ends are virtuous and fine, but also his having a conception of himself to which he aspires: the desire to exemplify virtue and fineness in action himself. A certain degree of self-consciousness is unavoidable if one is reflective and aspires to virtue—prerequisites for full virtue, on Aristotle’s view.

Assume that we accept the picture of the virtuous person’s practical thought so far delineated. What is it that *further* characterizes the motivation of the magnanimous person, which is supposed to render it objectionable? It appears to be his self-conscious awareness of his own great virtue, and the motivational role of that awareness in his action. Annas expresses the problem:

Aristotle has not given sufficient thought to the internal perspective involved [in the magnanimous person’s practical reasoning]. For the *megalopsuchos* has to have this thought, that he merits greater honor and respect than others do; and this makes exceptional virtue into something self-centred . . . But thoughts which centre on the self in this way are antithetical to the development of virtue, not expressive of it. For virtue involves a concern to do the right thing because it is the right thing, and to be the kind of person who does that—not to do the right thing because one is a person who is outstanding at doing the right thing, and thereby worthy of greater respect than others.⁶⁶

Note that the problem for Annas is not the magnanimous person’s recognition that the action is the right/virtuous/fine thing to do, nor even his desire to be the kind of person who does that (i.e. having a conception of himself to which he aspires, which exemplifies these desiderata in action). We may suppose that Annas accepts Aristotle’s general picture of the motivation of the virtuous person in action, as we have analyzed it. What is offensive about the magnanimous man is rather his present *self-awareness*, his conception of himself—not of that to which he aspires, but of his own present condition.

Is there a *general* objection to one's being aware of the condition of one's character? Surely not. If it is not objectionable for a person to have a conception of herself to which she *aspires*, it cannot be objectionable for her to have a (truthful) conception of herself *in via*, to be aware of her own status as she progresses toward the goal, and on that basis to act. Indeed, *progress* is unintelligible apart from such a conception. The problem, rather, seems to be a *special* one for the magnanimous person—that he (albeit accurately) recognizes his own condition to be *great*.⁶⁷ However, if there is no general problem with the consciousness of one's condition, what are the grounds for insisting upon a special problem for the magnanimous?

For Annas the problem seems to be that such a perspective will infect the magnanimous person's practical reasoning in an objectionable way: if he recognizes his greatness, he will act (B) "because [he] is a person who is outstanding at doing the right thing, and thereby worthy of greater respect than others." The import of the "because" here, however, is ambiguous. Understood one way, (B1), "because" introduces the *grounds* of the magnanimous man's motivation. This Aristotle certainly affirms. It is in this sense that the magnanimous person's self-conception is paramount for Aristotle: he wants to live up to his (great) potential, and so must have a sufficient grasp and appreciation of his potential. Annas, however, appears to have another construal in mind, (B2), where the "because" objectionably determines the specific *content* of the magnanimous person's motivation for acting, expressed in his first-order practical deliberation. We have seen, however, that we need not require (B2) of Aristotle. (Of course one's recognition of one's assets *may* translate into offensively self-conscious practical deliberation. Annas's objection, however, is that it *will* do so; for this conclusion a necessary connection needs to be demonstrated.) Susan's aspiration to live up to her extraordinary potential as a scientist makes salient for her a range of considerations as to what is the right thing for her to do in making a particular career choice. However, she is motivated to do what she so identifies because she sees it as the right thing for her to do. Steve aims at winning the gold medal in the high jump because he is a great high-jumper, indeed far better than others. His recognition of his ability grounds his attempt as reasonable. The desire to be better than everyone else, however, plays no conscious role at all in Steve's practical deliberation. He simply wants to be the best he can be, to reach the highest level of which he is able.

It is possible, then, *pace* Annas, for the magnanimous person, while fully recognizing his assets, to aspire to great action "because it is the right thing, and to be the kind of person who does that." What is offensive about Aristotle's picture, I now submit, is not the magnanimous man's consciousness of his own worth *per se*—which is rather an expression of the psychological stance that is necessary to his aspiring to great challenges. What is offensive, instead, is the *absence* of sufficient balancing factors of moderating humility and positive concern for others. It is these factors which most significantly distinguish Aquinas's account of magnanimity from Aristotle's. To this picture we now turn.

IV

In the *Summa Theologiae* (*ST*),⁶⁸ Thomas Aquinas depends primarily upon Aristotle for his conception of magnanimity, although he also draws extensively from biblical, earlier Christian, and Stoic sources.⁶⁹ I shall not attempt a complete exposition of Aquinas's extensive account; we are primarily interested in where Thomas diverges from or expands upon Aristotle.

From the outset Aquinas situates magnanimity differently from Aristotle. In the *ST*, Aquinas discusses some sixty virtues, the rest falling in some way under the four cardinal or hinge virtues of justice, temperance, courage, and practical wisdom, or else under the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. The virtue of magnanimity,⁷⁰ along with magnificence, patience, and perseverance (this structure drawn from Cicero),⁷¹ falls under the cardinal virtue of *courage*.⁷² Virtue makes its possessor good. Since a person's good is that he live rationally, Aquinas infers that virtue aligns a person and his actions with reason. This occurs in three ways: (i) one's reasoning itself is made right by intellectual virtues; (ii) rightness in human affairs is established by the moral virtue of justice; and (iii) the remaining moral virtues remove pas- sional obstacles to the establishment of right human affairs: temperance removes the obstacle of one's desiring something other than what right reasoning identifies, while courage removes the obstacle of the will's being repelled by what, though right, is difficult. Magnanimity falls under this last category.⁷³

An act of courage will either be an aggressive act (attempting a difficult or dangerous deed) or an act of endurance (the continued pursuit of a good over time). The virtues of magnanimity and magnificence are related to the first kind of courageous act, patience and perseverance to the second. Necessary to an aggressive act is a mental readiness or aggressiveness, which Cicero calls "confidence" (*fiducia*). This Aquinas initially identifies with magnanimity: it disposes one to an aggressive, hopeful frame of mind in relation to a difficult act.⁷⁴ The most difficult act with which courage is specifically concerned—the defining or limiting case of courage—is facing the danger of death. Magnanimity, *qua* confidence or mental aggressiveness, is an essential component of courage in facing such a circumstance. In the face of lesser dangers, on the other hand, magnanimity bears a different relation to courage: it is a distinct virtue, allied with courage as a secondary to a primary virtue, which is concerned specifically with great honors.⁷⁵ What is central to Aquinas's account is that magnanimity shares with courage the essence of virtues which aim at something difficult: firmness of mind (*firmitas animi*).⁷⁶ From the outset, then, Aquinas characterizes magnanimity essentially in terms of a mental attitude or psychological stance, aimed at action: magnanimity is a stretching forth of the mind to great things, exemplified essentially in great, difficult acts.⁷⁷

There are problems in associating magnanimity with courage. For one thing, many, perhaps most exemplifications of magnanimity do not involve facing dangers of death. On the other hand, the relationship

Thomas describes between magnanimity and courage is illuminating.⁷⁸ The essence of magnanimity does seem to be in the neighborhood of an aggressive, hopeful-frame of mind in relation to a difficult act: a stance of confidence toward great challenges, rooted in a strong sense of one's abilities and strengths. Moreover the strength of self which enables one to accomplish a great action in the face of immediate danger of death, although perhaps not a typical situation, arguably provides the clearest paradigm of magnanimity, the central case to which the other significations may be related analogically.

V

Aquinas extends the Aristotelian account helpfully, particularly where Aristotle's picture is incomplete or confusing. Elements we have seen to be implicit and embryonic in Aristotle become explicit and developed in Aquinas. He also draws from other sources to provide additional insights. I shall address Aquinas's contributions to the issues I have raised above with Aristotle.

1. A putative internal tension in Aristotle concerns the rôle of honor and external goods in magnanimity. Are honors to be sought or despised? Is the magnanimous person's concern for honor or for virtue? For Aquinas as for Aristotle, magnanimity is concerned with honors, the greatest of external goods.⁷⁹ Aquinas's account is more complex, however. A virtue is related to two things, according to Aquinas: the (subject) *matter* of its activity, and its *proper act*, which consists in the right use of its matter. Magnanimity's matter is (great) honor, and its end or proper act, is a great act.⁸⁰ Since a virtue's name is determined primarily by its act, the magnanimous person is so-called because he is *mentally prepared to do some great act*.⁸¹ Magnanimity is *about* handling great honor properly; its *aim* is great action, which is worthy of great honors.

Why is honor the greatest of external goods? Earlier, in his account of the virtue of justice, Thomas discussed *dulia*, or respectful service. There he argued, expanding upon Aristotle again, that honoring someone is a testimony to his excellence. If this witness is to be borne before other human beings it must be done with outward signs, such as words, offering external goods, bowing, etc. Honor is the reward of virtue, not in the sense that these external things are a sufficient reward, but that they are rightly employed as signs pointing to eminent virtue, for it is right that the good and the beautiful be made evident.⁸²

With these distinctions Aquinas addresses the putative Aristotelian tension. The magnanimous person both pursues honors *and* despises them. There are two ways to despise honors (or riches): properly, one may despise them in the sense of never acting against virtue to attain them, but only utilizing them in pursuit of virtue. Improperly, however, one may despise honors by not aiming at doing what deserves honor. Hence, Thomas clarifies: "And in this way magnanimity is about honor: not so much that one should value the honors given by human beings, but that he be eager to do those things that are worthy of honor."⁸³

For Aquinas, then, the clear emphasis is internal, rather than external; upon acting virtuously rather than upon the actual honor that attends it; upon being *honorable* rather than being *honored*.⁸⁴ When he says that magnanimity is concerned with great honors, we may gloss it as: magnanimity is concerned with actions that are worthy of great honors. Thus Aquinas's conception follows our interpretation of Aristotle, but is more explicit. However, Thomas does preserve an important rôle for (received) honor: it is truly worthy of pursuit in so far as it rightly reflects virtue (i.e. being *honorable*). Indeed, under such a description such pursuit is obligatory. He holds to a strong objectivity of value, to which even the magnanimous person is beholden: true virtue is rightly honored, and to pursue right honor by being worthy of it is, as it were, honorable. Aquinas himself provides a more complete gloss on Aristotle: "that person seems to be magnanimous who thinks himself worthy of great things, i.e. that he may do great actions and that great things should happen to him when he is in fact worthy."⁸⁵

2. Aquinas explicitly addresses questions about the compatibility of magnanimity with the rest of an Aristotelian virtue picture. According to Aquinas, a virtue is named by its extreme, limiting case. A virtue perfects a power: this perfection is not obvious in every expression of the power, but specifically in its great or difficult acts.⁸⁶ In the case of moral virtues related to passions, what is difficult is reason's job of determining an appropriate balance or rational tuning of the passions, since the passions themselves may resist reason. Such resistance may arise either from the passions themselves or from the objects of the passions. Since it is natural for the passions to respond to rational direction, great resistance to reason generally arises from the passions themselves only in the extreme or limiting cases, which then define their corresponding virtues. Thus, for example, courage is about the greatest fear and daring, and temperance about the greatest of desirable pleasures.

For some passions, however, resistance to reason is tied to a specific kind of exterior *object* of the passion. Examples include the desire for money or honor. Maintaining rightness with regard to this kind of passion requires two virtues, each defined with respect to the object: one for the extreme, particularly strong case, which itself constitutes a discreet challenge to the agent, and one for the common case—since the external objects of these passions are necessary for human life they also constitute in their ordinary form a perpetual challenge to reasonableness. Hence the desire for money requires two virtues to subject it to reason: magnificence for great sums, generosity for ordinary sums. Likewise there are two virtues about honors: the unnamed virtue concerns ordinary or small honors, while magnanimity is about great honors, which have their own particular drawing power. Special challenges require special excellences. It is true that great and little are accidental to honor, Thomas admits, when honor is considered in itself. However when viewed in terms of human action, there is a special, increased difficulty in acting rationally concerning great honors over against small ones. Hence a special virtue is required.⁸⁷

However, Aristotelian moral virtues concern passions or actions, and (received) honor is neither. Indeed, Aquinas considers the objection that if the matter of magnanimity were honor, an external object, it follows that it would *not* in fact be a moral virtue.⁸⁸ In his earlier discussion of the aggressive passions he said that the object of such passions is sensible good or evil, not considered absolutely, but under the aspect of “difficult” or “arduous.” In so far as it is seen as *good*, an arduous or difficult task produces in us a tendency towards it belonging to the passion of hope, while in so far as the task is seen to be difficult it pertains to the passion of despair.⁸⁹ Thomas now argues that “although honor is neither a passion nor an action, it is nevertheless an object of some passion, namely hope, which strives toward a difficult good. Indeed magnanimity is immediately about the passion of hope, and mediately about honor, insofar as it is the object of hope—just as courage is about the dangers of death insofar as they are the object of fear and daring.” That is, magnanimity, with regard to passion, is *hope management*, just as courage is fear management.⁹⁰ By distinguishing between the passion and its object Aquinas works out, as Aristotle did not, a relationship between magnanimity and the general Aristotelian virtue picture, and expands his earlier insight that magnanimity is an aggressive, hopeful frame of mind in relation to a difficult act.

A further Aristotelian tension concerns whether magnanimity is a specific, first-order virtue or a general, second-order virtue, “crowning” specific virtues, or both. For Aquinas, it is both. A specific virtue establishes the measure or mode of reason in a determinate matter. In the case of magnanimity, the matter is honors. Honor, considered in itself, is a particular kind of good, and so magnanimity considered in itself is a specific virtue. Magnanimity plays another, general rôle, however. Since it is also the reward of *every* virtue, its matter in this second respect turns out to include all the virtues—specifically all the great acts of all the virtues. The magnanimous person intends to do great deeds in every virtue inasmuch as he aims at those things which are worthy of great honors.⁹¹ Insofar as the acts of the other virtues are great, magnanimity adds its own luster or adornment to the virtues, making them even greater.⁹² Thus for Aquinas, as for Aristotle (*contra*, e.g., Nietzsche), it is not possible for one to be both wicked and magnanimous, for the fulfillment of the other virtues is a necessary condition for magnanimity.

Magnanimity is a moral virtue.⁹³ It is the disposition to take one’s extraordinary gifts, dispositions, opportunities, or goods of fortune and aim them at great deeds of virtue: “if one possesses great virtue of soul, magnanimity makes him strive toward perfect deeds of virtue, and it should be said similarly concerning the use of any other good, for example knowledge or external fortune.”⁹⁴ Indeed, for Aquinas these great deeds of virtue are not simply for one’s own sake: “his entire attention is concerned with the goods of the community and God.”⁹⁵

In so far as magnanimity is a specific virtue, then, is it *obligatory*, necessary to the virtuous life? Aquinas does consider failure in magnanimity to be blameworthy in certain cases, although he has a much fuller and more complex account of how one may fail to be magnanimous “by

excess" than Aristotle's simple appeal to "vanity." Aquinas's account is also more plausible, as certainly not all attempts at objectives beyond one's abilities and resources are equally problematic or vicious, or done from the same motivation. For Aquinas, there are three kinds of error here. "Ambition," for Aquinas, comprises inordinate kinds of desire for honor, and "vanity" comprises inordinate kinds of desire for "glory." These errors involve aiming at the wrong objects, or on the wrong grounds, or while not relating one's desires rightly to the glory of God or to the benefit of others.⁹⁶

Closest to Aristotle's "vanity" is *presumption*, one's aiming at deeds out of proportion to one's abilities.⁹⁷ What is wrong with this? Should we not rather encourage people to excel, whatever their abilities? The problem, for Aquinas, is that such aims fail fundamentally to preserve the naturally right balance between an action and a power; they are out of metaphysical, teleological whack. However, Aquinas's intent is clearly not mediocrity or quietism: he advocates the pursuit of excellence by all, the straining forward of each to advance towards virtue.⁹⁸ Nor does he consider just any attempt which exceeds one's powers to be presumptuous. The kind of acts he has in mind throughout are *extraordinary* deeds, which require extraordinary resources for success.⁹⁹ To enter Olympic gold medal competition when one is entirely unprepared or unsuited is blameworthily foolish. Similarly, to accept a high visibility vocational challenge requiring exceptional ability when one's gifts are insufficient is not only foolish but shameful, and will likely result in a waste of time and resources for many.

Pusillanimity is opposed (by deficiency) to the natural inclination to accomplish an action commensurate with one's capacities.¹⁰⁰ Aquinas distinguishes the species of pusillanimity—smallness of soul—from its cause and effect. The cause is both intellectual and appetitive: from the point of view of the intellect, pusillanimity involves a rational mistake, an ignorance of one's own condition. With regard to desire, it is a fear of failing to accomplish an action, which one falsely thinks exceeds one's capacity. The effect is to shrink from the great things of which one is worthy.¹⁰¹ While magnanimity includes accurate self-knowledge, it is a self-knowledge with moral content. It involves not only discerning one's capacities, but desiring to act in a manner fully worthy of them. Hence, ignorance of the pusillanimous kind does not arise from mere foolishness, but more from sluggishness, indolence, disinclination, or even improper pride¹⁰² in the examining of one's capacities or in carrying out what is under one's power. Magnanimity is desiderative, a moral virtue: "as it pertains to magnanimity, hope for anything presupposes one's appetite stretched forth to great things by desire."¹⁰³

Magnanimity, then, is "obligatory" for those so gifted, but not required of those who are not. Unlike Aristotle, Aquinas does not place magnanimity on even an apparent par of scope with temperance, justice, and courage: it is not a cardinal virtue, which has universal application; it is a subordinate virtue which has only special application, to those who have particular callings. As does Aristotle, Aquinas appeals as well to a related ordinary virtue, the unnamed virtue, which does seem to

have more general application: whatever one's gifts, exemplifying this virtue would be expected of one, in order for one to be virtuous. In addition to this general virtue, a special virtue is required of those with great gifts, in view of the special challenge presented by extraordinary challenges and honors.

Aquinas, filling out Aristotle's account, manages to preserve both the minimal requirements of ordinary virtue and the maximal requirements of extraordinary virtue. The maximal is rooted in the minimal; in going beyond it does not replace, subvert, or compete with it. As with Aristotle, moreover, to consider magnanimity "supererogatory" is not apt. For the less gifted, to attempt the great deeds of the magnanimous, would *not* be supererogatory-but-not-required: it would actually constitute a *failure* of virtue: presumption. What is required of each is rather to aim at fulfilling his rightly-discerned potential. To the less gifted, magnanimity simply does not apply; to the extraordinarily gifted, magnanimity is required.¹⁰⁴ A more apt concept than supererogation to serve as a supplement to that of the requirements of ordinary virtue, to which Aquinas could have (but didn't) profitably appeal here, is a theological one: the notion of one's *calling*, which is individualized according to one's gifts, inclinations, and opportunities. From one to whom much is given, much is required.¹⁰⁵

VI

1. Aristotle characterizes the magnanimous person as exhibiting attitudes to others which seem reprehensible, such as disdain and contempt for others of lesser worth. Not surprisingly, Aquinas's Christian account differs significantly from Aristotle's in this respect. How it differs, however, is not so much due to a different notion of magnanimity as it is to the *addition* of Christian theoretical background commitments and values which underwrite the need for a theologically grounded humility and a general respect for human beings as made in the image of God. These in turn give Aquinian magnanimity a distinctive shape. Where Aquinas actually specifies the great acts which particularly characterize the magnanimous person, for example, they look surprisingly like "loving one's neighbor."¹⁰⁶ "Since the magnanimous person aims at great things, it follows that he aims especially at those which convey a certain excellence, and scorns those which tend toward defect. Now it belongs to such excellence to be beneficent, generous, and grateful."¹⁰⁷ Great acts, for Aquinas, are particularly characterized by care for others. Such a conception opens up the field of magnanimity, for Thomas, beyond what is explicit in Aristotle (at least in the *Ethics*), where great acts take on a predominately military cast. On Aquinas's conception paradigms of extraordinary virtue could more obviously include individuals like Mother Teresa or doctors who choose to work in poor inner cities.

More generally, Aquinas's portrayal of the magnanimous person's treatment of others is two-tiered. First, as with Aristotle, the magnanimous person evaluates others in accord with their excellence. He exercises discrimination as to their exemplification of virtue, honoring virtue and despis-

ing vice. Such powers of discrimination are praiseworthy, for Aquinas; they are part of *prudentia*, morally sensitive practical wisdom. On his objectivist view of worth, it is proper to individuals to recognize and value worth, whether in others or in oneself, and to disdain the lack of such.

At the same time Aquinas, going beyond Aristotle, interprets the Aristotelian magnanimous man as according even the less worthy person proper respect: "For the magnanimous person is not said to be contemptuous in the sense that he despises others—as it were depriving them of due respect—but because he does not value them more than he should."¹⁰⁸ Thomas views personal worth on two levels: a floor of general, due respect for all, as well as differential structures of special respect or valuing of true worth, wherever it is exemplified. Not only are there honors which are reserved only for the worthy few, but there are also constraints in the other direction, concerning how one may treat *any* person, no matter how ignoble or unworthy.¹⁰⁹

Aquinas makes two additional moves beyond Aristotle, which govern the magnanimous person's esteeming of his own and others' particular excellences. First, he *relativizes* human worth by placing one's worth—one's gifts, dispositions, opportunities, and goods—within the framework of stewardship. According to Thomas, what is great in a person he has as a gift from God.¹¹⁰ The view of one's gifts *as* gifts excludes improper pride, in the sense of one's holding one's own value as supreme or entirely self-produced, or as distinguishing oneself in the most fundamental axiological way from other, differently gifted individuals. It does not exclude a high esteem of one's gifts, however. In fact, it provides an additional reason for such esteem: gratitude.¹¹¹

Second, and on this basis, Thomas introduces another virtue which, in a different discussion,¹¹² he strikingly describes as a twin virtue (*duplex virtus*) to magnanimity: *humility*. These twin virtues keep one within a rational balance with regard to great, difficult honors, and also with regard to treating people in terms of their worth. Magnanimity disposes one to think well enough of oneself to live up to one's potential. Humility, a part of temperance,¹¹³ helps one recognize one's deficiencies. Magnanimity also disposes one to despise others insofar as they abandon God's gifts. To despise them, however, means: to esteem their opinions, values, and behavior—not their persons—less than one esteems God's gifts, which are of true worth; and thus not to do anything disgraceful for the sake of impressing them or out of fear of offending them. Humility, on the other hand, honors others and esteems them as *superior* inasmuch as something of God's gifts are seen in them. Humility opens one's eyes to see and appreciate the gifts of others, just as magnanimity does for one's own. In both cases it is the objective value of God's gifts that is emphasized, and so improper pride is excluded. Magnanimity and humility are not contrary, says Aquinas, although they seem to head in different directions, since they proceed according to different considerations.¹¹⁴ Indeed, according to Thomas, both are necessary to virtue: together they dispose one to exercise both the proper esteem *and* contempt called for in relating to excellence in oneself and others.¹¹⁵

In relativizing one's worth in terms of gift and stewardship, which

results in humility, and in affirming the general respect required for others, Aquinas's Christian presuppositions most significantly alter his broadly Aristotelian conception of magnanimity. His view is suggestive for all who both are attracted to an ethics of virtue *and* subscribe to the equality of human worth. A notion of basic human dignity may be compatible with an appreciation of particular excellences and an admiration of superior ones, when the levels of a minimum of universal respect and a maximum of particular admiration are kept distinct, and when proper esteem and contempt are aimed rather at ideas and behaviors than at the basic dignity of persons. Moreover the addition of humility, understood as a complement to magnanimity, provides needed balance to the Aristotelian picture. One who *only* grasps one's own strengths, without fully appreciating the strengths of others and acknowledging them when appropriate, is not ethically superior, however rightly self-confident one may be. Humility is an essential aspect of handling honors properly.

2. Finally, we face the problem of the magnanimous person's apparent self-absorption. Aquinas's account shifts Aristotle's emphasis from the magnanimous man's consciousness of his own great worth to the great actions for which the magnanimous person strives. Although sufficient gifts are clearly required by Aquinas for magnanimity, the magnanimous person on Aquinas's conception is not so baldly self-conscious as he appears in Aristotle. Indeed Aquinas's most explicit account of the magnanimous person's recognition of the greatness of his own strengths actually appears in the context of Aquinas's discussion of *humility*, where he describes them as gifts of God.¹¹⁶

I argued above that the magnanimous person's awareness of his strengths need not be offensive, *per se*, although in Aristotle's explicit picture this awareness is insufficiently balanced by moderating humility and positive concern for the welfare of others. Aquinas's account provides these balancing considerations. With these considerations in mind, we may accept the central insight of Aristotle's and Aquinas's accounts of magnanimity, which is that a proper recognizing and esteeming of one's gifts seems not only unobjectionable but *necessary* for one's reasonably attempting difficult challenges. Magnanimity—indeed its name as “great-souled”—constitutes at its core the notion of one's having sufficient psychic strength to aim at a great but difficult action. Unless one has the confidence that one *can* do it, that one has the gifts and abilities to meet the task, one will not reasonably attempt it. Such confidence requires an awareness of one's gifts and abilities, a conception of oneself as being capable of the task, and a desire to express that conception in action.

Is a clear awareness and appreciation of one's gifts and abilities compatible with Christian virtue? We may reasonably complain that Aquinas does not go far enough in relativizing one's view of one's worth: he does not emphasize in this context, as does the New Testament generally, the grace of God in forgiving and blessing decidedly *unvirtuous* human beings. Still, having an accurate appraisal of one's gifts *as* gifts is commended by no less than St. Paul: “For by the grace

given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourselves more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourselves with sober judgment,¹¹⁷ in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you . . . We have different gifts, according to the grace given us . . . [each should use his gift] in proportion to his faith" (Romans 12.3, 6).¹¹⁸

Aquinas is, if anything, less reluctant than Aristotle to attribute to the magnanimous person the desire to exemplify great excellence in his actions. "Thus the magnanimous person intends to do great deeds in every virtue; that is, in so far as he aims at those things which are worthy of great honors."¹¹⁹ Moreover, he avoids defective, vicious acts (such as untruthfulness or complaining) under a special conception (*specialem rationem*), as being contrary to excellence or greatness.¹²⁰ The virtue of magnanimity, then, gives its possessor a *further* reason to act (avoid acting) in a given situation, beyond his recognition that such an act is virtuous (vicious): viz. that it is (not) great. Indeed, an act, say of courage, so performed, now belongs to a further species of act—magnanimity—following, Aquinas notes, a different motive.¹²¹

This can largely be understood along the lines we traced with Aristotle. The magnanimous person's awareness of his own strengths and his consideration and valuing of acts that are great may play their primary role in his second-order reflection concerning the kind of life that is worth living, rather than in his first-order deliberations about what to do. His grasp of what is great, and his motivation to perform it, are explained by his being magnanimous, but his choice of the great act may be simply "for its own sake"; he need not have the *thought* that it is an extraordinarily great act.

Still it is natural to read both Aristotle and Aquinas as assuming that a magnanimous person *would* in at least some cases have such a thought, i.e. would construe the practical situation facing him in a way that expresses a more conscious awareness of his abilities and the greatness of the act he is considering. Even this, however, is not necessarily problematic. An extraordinarily gifted individual so situated may well recognize the appropriateness of certain actions in so far as they express or exemplify the greatness to which she consciously aspires; she may see an action as: the kind of act I am able to do, the kind I aspire to do because of who I am and the gifts I possess, and the kind of act I should be ashamed not to do (and in this sense "must" do)—although it is not required of me by others, nor would I blame anyone else for not doing it. A person so gifted and situated would thus see contrary acts as "beneath" her, as not exemplifying in action what she takes herself to be and aspires to be—although they are not vicious acts, or ones that she would blame someone else for doing.¹²² There need be nothing offensive about this picture.

VII

By way of summarizing the picture of magnanimity that has developed here, consider a contemporary paradigm of a remarkable, extraordinary individual: an educational administrator who takes on the challenge of becoming the principal of a depressed, dangerous inner city

school, with the aspiration of making it one of the nation's outstanding schools. Individuals have accomplished similar aims with remarkable success in recent years. What does such a person require? She needs exceptional gifts of leadership, political and economic savvy, relational skills, and experience. Moreover, she needs to know that she has those strengths, and that she can use them effectively. Further, however, she *needs an aggressive, hopeful frame of mind in relation to a difficult act*, a confident stance towards her challenge, which will impel her towards it. These are the components of magnanimity: for the exceptionally gifted, a clear understanding of her strengths and a sufficiently confident appreciation of them which will enable her to act in aggressive hope of success. The virtue of humility enables her to see her weaknesses as well, so as to temper her confidence with realism and to see and value the strengths of others, enabling her to work with them more effectively.

Why does such a magnanimous person take on the challenge? Because it "needs" to be done? Certainly it does, but many things need to be done. Why this one? Because one of her beliefs is that there ought to be more good schools? Again, there are manifold ways to contribute to good schools. Here, it seems to me, when we seek to explain the magnanimous person's actions, appealing in some way to her self-consciousness is plausible, if not unavoidable. She takes on the challenge because it's an eminently worthy task, *a fine action which she is uniquely qualified to do, and which expresses the kind of excellence which she knows she is capable of and aspires to exemplify to the highest degree*. It's a gold medal-type challenge, whether she is in fact so honored or not. Beyond the other virtues it expresses, it is a great act, and this provides an *additional* reason for her to do it, since she sees herself as capable of and aspiring to such greatness. Her strengths and the act's greatness uniquely converge, such that were she not to do the act, she would be ashamed of herself; she would have failed to aspire to her potential. She would have missed her "calling."

I suggest that this picture plausibly represents how extraordinary excellence is in fact expressed in terms of practical reasoning. Is it offensive from a Christian perspective? It need not be, particularly if Thomas's additional insights are appropriated. Such a person, following Aquinas, need not be arrogant; she may esteem her gifts highly *as* gifts from God, and her humility may dispose her fully to value others' gifts as well. She need not be priggish or self-absorbed; indeed her strong sense of self may liberate her, as Thomas suggests, to give her whole attention to the good of others,¹²³ rather than constantly seeking their affirmation.¹²⁴

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NOTES

1. John Casey, *Pagan Virtue: An Essay in Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 200.

2. I shall use "magnanimity" to render the Greek *megalopsuchia* and Latin *magnanimitas*. Besides "magnanimity" and "great-souledness" (its lit-

eral rendering), *megalopsuchia* is also rendered by Aristotle's interpreters as pride (Ross), high-mindedness (Ostwald), superiority (Thomson), and dignity (Joachim).

3. I do not assume that the differences in cultural and religious context between Aristotle and Aquinas, and between both of them and us, are insignificant. Nor do I wish to suggest that the concept of magnanimity remains unaltered between these contexts. What I do assume is that there is sufficient common ground in human experience with respect to basic human needs and capacities—in Nussbaum's term, "grounding experiences"—to fix the general virtue-type for which Aristotle and Aquinas each provide specification, and that we (particularly as philosophical descendants of both thinkers) are able to come to some understanding and evaluation of those specifications on their own terms and in light of our background convictions. See Martha C. Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy Volume XIII: Ethical Theory: Character and Virtue*, ed. P. A. French, T. E. Uehling, and H. K. Wettstein (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 32-53; and Nussbaum, "Comparing Virtues," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 21 (1993): 345-396. For a caution regarding Nussbaum's approach, see Robert C. Roberts, "Emotions Among the Virtues of the Christian Life," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 20 (1992), 63. For an excellent (and relevant here) discussion and account of cross-cultural ethical analysis, see Lee H. Yearley, *Mencius and Aquinas: Theories of Virtue and Conceptions of Courage* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990).

4. I shall be concerned primarily with Aristotle's account in *EN*, and to a lesser extent with the *Ethica Eudemia* (*EE*). Translations of *EN* (with additions or alterations in parentheses) are from *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. T. H. Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985); translations of other works of Aristotle are from J. Barnes, ed., *Complete Works of Aristotle: the Revised Oxford Translation*, 2 vols. (Princeton: 1984).

I shall not address every aspect of magnanimity. For example I shall not be concerned with Aristotle's description of the magnanimous person's mannerisms and voice (1125a13-16) (although Aquinas does try to incorporate and defend these (*ST* IIaIIae.129.3.3)). For some interesting cultural insights into these matters, see Dirk t. D. Held, "Megalopsuchia in *Nicomachean Ethics* iv," *Ancient Philosophy* 13 (1993): 95-110.

5. Since Aristotle not only uses exclusively male pronouns here, but also obviously means to restrict the scope of magnanimity to men (complete with "deep voice," 1125a13-16), I shall not attempt to use inclusive language in explicating him. The same holds for Aquinas, although I suggest that his broadening of Aristotelian magnanimity in several respects would in principle open him to the inclusion of women.

6. 1123a34-b1.

7. 1123b1-4.

8. Aristotle suggests, but does not explain further, that failure to be magnanimous—by excess, as it were—is actually more complex than this: "not everyone who thinks he is worthy of greater things than he is worthy of is vain" (1123b9). As we shall see, Aquinas's account here, as if following this hint, is significantly more complex.

9. 1123b8-12; 1125a27-35; 1123b5-6; 1123b7-10.

10. 1123b11-12.

11. 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 (1990), 527, so limits (i), and considers it an intellectual virtue.

12. 1124a18-20.
13. 1123b15-24.
14. 1124a5-9.
15. 1123b36; 1124a25.
16. 1124a1-3.
17. 1124a27-1124b1.
18. 1124b19-1125a9.
19. 1124b5-7.
20. 1124b10-15.

21. W. D. Ross, *Aristotle: A Complete Exposition of His Works and Thought*, Fifth ed. (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 203.

22. Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Collier Books, 1966), 79.

23. For attempts to answer other objections as well, see Howard J. Curzer, "Aristotle's Much Maligned *Megalopsychos*," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 69 (1991): 131-151.

24. Harry V. Jaffa, *Thomism and Aristotelianism: A Study of the Commentary by Thomas Aquinas on the Nicomachean Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 123-127.

25. Curzer, "Not So Great," 518-522, opts for virtue as the core of Aristotle's account, and downplays the rôle of honor. However Aristotle is as explicit, or more, about the centrality of honor than he is about virtue, and this needs to be accounted for.

26. See D. A. Rees, "'Magnanimity' in the Eudemian and Nichomachean Ethics," in *Untersuchungen zur Eudemischen Ethik*, ed. Paul Moraux and Dieter Harlfinger (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1970), 231-243; Neil Cooper, "Aristotle's Crowning Virtue," *Apeiron* 22 (1989): 191-205; Curzer, "Not So Great"; and Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) for variations on this thesis.

27. 1123b14-22.

28. Cooper, "Aristotle's Crowning Virtue," 196-197. This is implicit in the picture in *EN* as well, where the magnanimous person discriminates between the honors given by excellent or "just anyone," and for something worthy vs. something small (1124a10).

29. For discussions of the concept of honor, see Peter Berger, "On the Obsolescence of the Concept of Honor," in *Revisions: Changing Perspectives in Moral Philosophy*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and Alasdair MacIntyre (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 172-181; Held, "*Megalopsuchia*."

30. *EN* 1124a20-27.

31. 1124a26-1124b1.

32. 1123b35-1124a12.

33. A problem for my view is that Aristotle, normally sensitive to homonymy, does not explicitly appeal to the distinction I have made here. It is an Aristotelian insight, however, that homonyms are often missed (e.g. *Physics* 7.4). On homonymy in Aristotle, see T. H. Irwin, "Homonymy in Aristotle," *Review of Metaphysics* 34 (1981): 523-544. In further defense of my reading: it renders Aristotle's remarks here consistent with his accounts of honor, self-sufficiency, and external goods in book 1 of *EN* (cf. Roger Crisp, "Aristotle's Inclusivism," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* XII (1994): 111-136), and with his assertion in the *An. Post.* that Socrates, whose life ended without (received) honor, was magnanimous (97b15-25). The account in *EE* seems to emphasize honors received: "He would be pained if denied honor,

and if ruled by one undeserving. He delights most of all when he obtains honor" (1232b11-12). This is followed immediately, however, by the distinctions discussed above, concerning who gives the honors and on what basis. These distinctions assume the objectivity of value noted, and hence the distinction between receiving and being worthy of honor. However, I do not wish to claim that Aristotle downplayed or was not concerned with received honors.

34. Aquinas follows Aristotle here, disagreeing in some respects with Seneca and Cicero (*ST IIaIIae*.129.8). I cannot pursue here the relation between external goods and magnanimity, except to note that Aristotle appears to emphasize much more than Aquinas the rôle of external goods in the "great worth" of the magnanimous person, a view which suggests that a poor person could not be magnanimous. Aquinas's conception of personal goods and of the great actions at which the magnanimous man aims (some of which is in Aristotle, but more implicitly), broadens the scope of magnanimity.

35. 1124a30-1124b7.

36. *EN* 2.3.

37. Magnanimity is not the only Aristotelian virtue tied to objects external to the agent. So also is the other grand virtue, magnificence. Justice is also necessarily linked to specific, objectively discernible external states of affairs.

38. 1125a20-27, my emphasis.

39. 1125a28-32.

40. According to Rees, "'Magnanimity,'" 240, the great things in *EE* are above all great actions.

41. Cf. 1124b7-9, 1117b7-9.

42. 1123b13-14.

43. According to Curzer, "Not So Great," 532ff., the mean doctrine and greatness are simply incompatible; the attempt to combine them is a holdover of Aristotle's failed effort to synthesise Homeric and Socratic conceptions of magnanimity.

44. See J. O. Urmson, "Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. A. O. Rorty (Berkeley: 1980), 157-170. Eckart Schütrumpf, "Magnanimity, *Megalopsuchia*, and the System of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*," *Archive für Geschichte der Philosophie* 71 (1989), 13, points out that an important positive aspect of Aristotle's discussion of magnanimity is that here "Aristotle guards himself against a potential misunderstanding, namely that the concept of the mean in his definition of virtue should be understood as mediocrity."

45. 1117a30.

46. *EN* 2.6; 5.3ff.

47. Curzer, "Not So Great," 530, recognizes the difference here, but takes it to signify a difference between natural and moral virtues rather than between ordinary and extraordinary moral virtues.

48. 1123b5.

49. 1123b30-1124a3.

50. Nancy Sherman, "Common Sense and Uncommon Virtue," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy: Volume XIII: Ethical Character and Virtue*, ed. P. A. French, T. E. Uehling, and H. K. Wettstein (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 97-114; Annas, *Morality of Happiness*. Neither attributes to Aristotle himself a conception of supererogation.

51. Sherman, "Common Sense," 104.

52. *EE* 1233a15-24; *EN* 1125a22.

53. EN 1125a24.

54. Curzer ("Not So Great," 532) construes (i) in terms of intellectual rather than moral virtue, and denies the centrality of desire in Aristotle's account: "Rather it seems that the appropriately ambitious person [unnamed virtue] desires honor rightly, whatever he deserves, while the *megalopsychos* deserves and thinks he deserves great honor, whatever he desires. Thus, although magnificence is a large scale version of liberality, *megalopsychia* is not a large scale version of ambition [the unnamed virtue] at all." This is inconsistent with Aristotle's picture. First, it separates what Aristotle puts together generally and specifically. A general desire for excellence is assumed in the account as a whole, entailed by Aristotle's metaphysical teleology whereby each thing necessarily seeks its own perfection. Moreover Aristotle applies this desire specifically here: "For each sort of person seeks what [he thinks] he is worth" (1125a25). Second, it denies Aristotle's explicit claim, also reflected in the chiasmic structure of EN 4.1-4.4, that magnanimity is related to the unnamed virtue as magnificence is to generosity.

55. An objection to magnanimity by Curzer, "Not So Great," 530-531, rests on a confusion here.

56. According to Sherman, "Common Sense," 104, magnanimity has general and special senses in the *EE*, but only a "supervenient" one in the *EN*. This claim cannot be sustained by the *EN* account.

57. A related objection is that the magnanimous man is *ungrateful*, not remembering the good done to him. His apparently reprehensible attitudes in this regard, however, also appear to be incompatible with others of Aristotle's own explicit views, spelled out elsewhere. In discussing exceptional virtue (i.e. that which goes beyond what is required by law) in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle lists "gratitude to, or requital of, our benefactors, readiness to help our friends, and the like" (1374a25), and argues that equity "bids us remember benefits rather than injuries, and benefits received rather than benefits conferred" (1374b16-17). Thus Aquinas's brief supplementary considerations in *ST* IIaIIae.129.3 ad 5, which construe Aristotelian magnanimity as compatible with the virtue of gratitude (Aquinas's account of the virtue of gratitude is in IIaIIae.106-107), has the additional value of rendering Aristotle's own account consistent. This provides further support to the general line of interpretation of Aristotle being followed here.

58. 1232a40.

59. EN 1124b1-2.

60. On Aristotle's picture, Jaffa asserts, the magnanimous man's greatest preoccupation in between his moments of greatness must be the contemplation of his own greatness. *Thomism and Aristotelianism*, 140.

61. EN 1105a32.

62. See Bernard Williams, "Acting as the Virtuous Person Acts," in *Aristotle and Moral Realism*, ed. Robert Heinaman (London: UCL Press, 1995), 13-23; and Rosalind Hursthouse, "The Virtuous Agent's Reasons: A Reply to Bernard Williams," in *ibid.*, 24-33.

63. 1120a23. E.g. in relation to courage (3.7, 1115b20-23; 1116a13; 3.8, 1116b31); temperance (3.12, 1119b17); generosity (4.1, 1120a25).

64. 1248b-1249a7. See Sarah W. Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 373-383; and Anthony Kenny, *Aristotle on the Perfect Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 9-15.

65. EN 2.3, 1104b31-34; 8.2, 1155b16-18; 8.13, 1162b35-1163a1.

66. Annas, *Morality of Happiness*, 118.

67. It will not do to seek to evade this problem by denying that

Aristotle's magnanimous person is aware of his own condition (*pace* Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 121n.29). His consciousness of his own worth is a necessary condition, i.e. (i), of his being magnanimous; it is for Aristotle a desideratum, not a problem. Moreover, for Aristotle, the necessity for virtue of recognizing the extent of one's worth is not limited to magnanimity. In books 8 and 9 of *EN* Aristotle's conception of complete friendship, based on shared virtue, presupposes one's awareness of the worth of oneself and others. For Aristotle, such a friendship provides the context for what we have seen as one's valuing the honor extended by excellent people (i.e. good friends). See Cooper, "Aristotle's Crowning Virtue," 201-203.

68. Translations of Aquinas are my own, from the *ST* and from Aquinas's commentary on *EN* (*Sententia Libri Ethicorum*, hereafter *In EN*).

69. His explicit appeals to authority in the *sed contra* portions of his discussion on magnanimity include four appeals to Aristotle, two to Cicero, one to Macrobius and Andronicus, and one to the Bible. Besides the *sed contra* appeals, he also cites Pseudo-Dionysius, Seneca, and Isidore.

70. *IIaIIae.129.*

71. *De Inv. Rhet. ii.*

72. *IIaIIae.123-140.* There are also hints of a close relationship between magnanimity and courage in Aristotle. The courageous person faces death in the finest conditions, which is endorsed by honors (1115a29-36); the magnanimous man faces dangers in a great cause only, since he honors few things (1124b7-9). See Casey, *Pagan Virtue*, 62ff. For an extensive account of courage in Aquinas, see Yearley, *Mencius and Aquinas*. Concerning how the conception of courage is changed by Aquinas's Christian outlook, see Stanley Hauerwas, "The Difference of Virtue and the Difference it Makes," *Modern Theology* 9 (1993): 249-264.

73. *IIaIIae.123.1.*

74. He later more finely distinguishes the two: confidence belongs to magnanimity as a certain mode of hope (*IIaIIae.129.6 ad 3*).

75. *IIaIIae.128.*

76. *IIaIIae.129.5.*

77. *IIaIIae.129.1, 2.*

78. For more on problems and illuminations see Yearley, *Mencius and Aquinas*, 33-36.

79. An interesting biographical sidelight is that Aquinas consistently refused ecclesiastical honors. James A. Weisheipl, O. P., *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), 48.

80. *IIaIIae.129.8*

81. *IIaIIae.129.1.*

82. *IIaIIae.103.1; 103.1 ad 3.* Cf. *EN* 1124a5-9. Here Aquinas appeals to Matthew 5.15, that a light shouldn't be hid under a bushel.

83. *IIaIIae.129.1 ad 3.*

84. See *IIaIIae.131.1 ad 3.*

85. *In EN* 4.8.736.

86. This is how Aquinas interprets Aristotle's statement that "both craft and virtue are concerned in every case with what is harder" (*EN* 2.3, 1105a9-10).

87. *IIaIIae.129.2.; 129.2 ad 1.*

88. *IIaIIae.129.1 obj. 2.*

89. *IaIIae.23.2.*

90. *IIaIIae.129.7.* Hope here is to be distinguished from the theological virtue of hope. The theological virtue of hope concerns something arduous to be obtained by another's help, while magnanimity, whose proper object is

the doing of great acts, tends to something arduous in the hope of obtaining something within one's own power (IIaIIae.17.5 ad 4).

91. IIaIIae.129.4; ad 1.

92. IIaIIae.129.4 ad 3.

93. IIaIIae.129.3 ad 1.

94. IIaIIae.129.3 ad 4; cf. 133.1 ad 2.

95. *In EN* 4.10.779.

96. IIaIIae.131, 132.

97. IIaIIae.130.

98. IIaIIae.130.1 ad 1.

99. IIaIIae.130.2 ad 2.

100. IIaIIae.133.1.

101. IIaIIae.133.2.

102. IIaIIae.133.2 ad 1. The refusal to employ one's great goods for the sake of virtue can be the product of *pride* (*superbia*), when one depends too much on one's own (low) opinion of oneself, and is unwilling to accept the more accurate, higher estimation of oneself by others (133.1 ad 3). It should be obvious from this, as well as from the rest of the discussion, that the "proper pride" of magnanimity was not considered by Aquinas to be equivalent, intentionally or extensionally, to arrogance, vanity, or the pride (*superbia*) condemned by Christianity.

103. IIaIIae.128.6.

104. Although Aquinas does see the seeds of magnanimity present even in those virtuous persons who do not now possess the great gifts and opportunities required for magnanimity (IIaIIae.129.3 ad 2).

105. Luke 12.48. Aquinas does not cite this Scripture, but he does relate pusillanimity to the biblical story of the unwise steward who buried his talents (IIaIIae.133.1).

106. Again, this is not entirely alien to Aristotle's view. See *Rhet.* 1366b17: "Magnanimity is the excellence that disposes us to do good to others on a large scale." In the *Ethics*, the actions of the magnificent person are for the benefit of the *polis* (1123a5). It is implicit that this would hold of the magnanimous (the other grand virtue) person as well.

107. IIaIIae.129.4 ad 2.

108. *In EN* 4.10.774.

109. For an account of Aquinas's developed theory of equal regard for persons, see Jean Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics* (London: SPCK, 1990), ch. 5.

110. IIaIIae.129.3 ad 4.

111. That is, one additionally rightly esteems, rather than despises, gifts that are graciously given one by God. It is also true that due esteem of one's gifts will rightly result in gratitude towards the giver, so that esteem provides reason for gratitude, just as gratitude provides reason for esteem.

112. IIaIIae.161.1.

113. Note that Aquinas is building upon an Aristotelian foundation here in relating temperance to the question of esteeming one's own worth. What is new is that Aquinas makes a part of temperance—humility—not only necessary to the one of few gifts, but also to the one of many.

114. IIaIIae.129.3 ad 4.

115. Cf. Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 189-192.

116. IIaIIae.129.3 ad 4.

117. . . . *phronein eis to sôphronein* . . .

118. The context of using one's gift here, however, is shaped by distinc-

tively Christian values: "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves" (Romans 12.10). (*New International Version*)

119. *IIaIIae.129.4 ad 1.*

120. *IIaIIae.129.4 ad 2.*

121. *In EN 4.8.746.*

122. Cf. Edmund Pincoffs, "Quandary Ethics," *Mind* 80 (1971): 552-571; David L. Norton, "Moral Minimalism and the Development of Moral Character," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy: Volume XIII: Ethical Character and Virtue*, ed. P. A. French, T. E. Uehling, and H. K. Wettstein (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 180-195.

123. *In EN 4.10.779.*

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