

SELF-RELIANCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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1 Thesis

In this paper, I will reconcile Emerson’s vision of self-reliance with certain challenges of conducting life in the digital age. This digital age has witnessed fundamental changes in human behavior and human interaction via the rise of digital worlds and the projection of a digital self where this digital self is divorced, and often deceiving, of the real, true self. The rise of social media platforms like Facebook and messaging services like Gmail and Slack have fundamentally altered human identities, ultimately distancing human beings from the self-reliance that Emerson advocated for. Emerson’s ideas are not a solution for conduct of life in the digital age – in fact, I will identify in subsequent sections that certain ideas of Emerson’s self-reliance are fundamentally incompatible with such realities of everyday life. However, being said, certain Emersonian self-reliance are still relevant and, moreover, prescriptive for living better lives in this digital age by nature of encouraging individuals to become independent thinkers. Thus, a reconciliation of Emersonian ideas and of communication in the digital age is probably the most productive viewpoint to be developed in this project concerning the conduct of life.

2 Axioms

First, I will establish some axioms and definitions. The self-reliance being discussed over the course of this paper will strictly refer to the self-reliance of Ralph Waldo Emerson in his 1841 essay, “Self-Reliance,” which is defined by Emerson to be a “triumph of principles.” This triumph of principles, as Emerson argues, manifests itself in the way man carries itself in the presence of opposition, this opposition being identified to be one of standard social norms and of social propriety. In context of the digital age, the social opposition resides largely in the digital world, which in this paper will refer to all forms of communication that occur over the screen, serving as a proxy for direct human-to-human interaction. Under this definition, Facebook, Gmail, Twitter, and Slack are all considered digital worlds while something like

the New York Times mobile app is not. This is an important distinction because a proxy for direct human-to-human interaction requires an interchange between human source and human receiver. In our New York Times mobile app example, the human source is fixed to be the writers of the New York Times while the human receiver is fixed to be the reader. Thus, no interchange of roles occurs between source and receiver, thereby disqualifying the New York Times as a digital world. In contrast, to participate in Facebook will necessarily require one to interchange between roles of receiving and sourcing information to friends and family, thereby making Facebook a truly digital world. The coexistence of these digital worlds makes this age we live in a digital age. Finally, our participation in these digital worlds makes us identify a digital self. This digital self is different and divorced from the real self because it requires capitulating to the demands of the digital world, one that would have never occurred had our real selves made the conscious effort to not participate the digital world in the first place. We will prove later on how the digital self not only is divorced from the real self, but also deceives the real self. We define this deception to be one where the self strays further and further away from the “triumph of principles” and thereby straying further away from achieving self-reliance.

3 The Importance of Self-Reliance in the Digital Age

The pivotal argument governing the integrity of this paper is the importance of preserving self-reliance, these “triumphs of principles.” In this section, I will argue the merits of Emerson’s defined self-reliance and why such self-reliance is necessary for how we are to spend our time living.

The best paradigm to use in illustrating the importance of self-reliance is to consider the difference between the human and the machine. In the digital age, new technologies have arisen to give machines greater computational power, becoming more specialized and more complex in approaching the capabilities of human beings.

In such a situation, how can the human differentiate itself from the machine? The machine is pre-conditioned, pre-programmed, predictable up to a fault. Meanwhile, the human being, not subjected to these rules of conditioning and programmed structure, experiences a certain freedom. As Emerson writes, if we were indeed programmed by such a God, this God has “armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself.” If the human is to distinguish itself from the machine, the human must bring out the natural faculty to stand by itself,

4 The Impossibility of Emerson’s Self-Reliance

While self-reliance has been shown to be important, Emerson’s self-reliance is

Finally, by participating in these digital worlds, we taking on a new layer of identity, compromising original principles by further following more rules of the digital world and isolating ourselves from a real human identity. The principles we follow in this digital world will at best be where nothing real is at stake to give certain principles a distinctive triumph, undeterred by qualities afflicting the everyday soul and at worst be the draining of all too many lives who have never achieved self-reliance.

4.1 Digital Worlds Opposing Self-Reliance

Having established some axioms and definitions, I now proceed to illustrate how the digital world exhibits the same opposition of Emerson’s social world in challenging self-reliance.

Moreover, as human beings spend more time in digital worlds, the entire human experience is confined to just a few tweets and Facebook posts, all of which can quickly emulated by such machines. In these environments,

4.2 Falsehood of Identity in the Digital-Self

Here, I will be using Emerson's definition of self-identity. Emerson writes that individuals who are plagued by the struggles of everyday life. Moreover, the ideas in which I endow and ingrain within individuals like Emerson are heightened by a certain willingness to appreciate the life that is good and true.

The digital world is simply one where nothing feels particularly real. That there is a fundamental dichotomy between what is right and what is wrong

5 Reconciliation via Digital Minimalism

The best solution is to compromise with "digital minimalism". Digital minimalism is defined to be Limiting one's access to social media for example is a great way to project notions of self-identity. Moreover, writing about certain ideas is also another aspect of asserting self-identity. Emerson's dilemma of self-reliance would be to challenge our own ideals of human understanding, of human motivation.

6 Work

7 Incompatability of Emerson

8 The Human Connection and Empathy

Many of these. This goes into the classic tree description of if a tree falls, did it truly exist? Or did it not, or are we becoming socially insignificant individuals? How are we to behave in this day and age? Are we running out of resources, where our time spent is not on productive work any more? What's to say that we truly are living our lives to the fullest capacity and learning with maximum intensity?

9 Illusions of the Digital Self

This digital self is often based on idealization rather than reality. Recent studies have suggested that human beings are spending most of their time on the computer.

From an "anti-self-reliance" perspective, the conduct of individuals are a social media landscape taking hold of individuals' time.

These realistic goals of individuals in the digital age primarily consists of a social media landscape where individuals are capitulate by partaking in social media.

10 Work in the Digital Age

11 Deep Work and Emerson Identity

where individuals find themselves capitulating to social media and constructing a digital self in the modern age. I will examine particular dichotomies, which can be largely interpreted as failings in Emerson's argument in anticipating exceptions seen in our time that he might have failed to account for during his time.

The great society that Emerson writes is one built on past ideals of correctness and sincerity. The life outside of the confines and many other things leave us often utterly convinced that there is a greater solution.

Rather than accepting that individual contributions are often at odds with the rest of the society, the opinions fostered by most individuals are creating something that is more egalitarian.

The society that Emerson writes about in his Self-Reliance work is one ingrained in fundamental principles of nature. How come? What is the natural world that Emerson writes about?

This is moreover the setup I've enjoyed. I think it has presented itself with many fantastic benefits.

Every Mac Desktop and Windows PC comes with a default desktop background of a natural landscape. The world of the 21st century is completely digital, and human interaction may be part of a bygone era. Is this a falsehood that governs our day-to-day activities or is this something more fundamental?

The idea that Emerson has contrived is one where true work is independent with the other notions of identity.

In 'Self-Reliance', Emerson discusses the fundamental importance of asserting the individual self, comprising of several steps such as speaking your latent conviction, and the like. What is this conviction?

Moreover, individuals are rarely able to reconcile the good and the bad. This has been the many wonderful qualities that have governed modern human existence. There is finally a question of pertinence that permeates much of human day existence. Why should Emerson or Nietzsche be here to criticize or remark on these human virtues?

Evince is a great document viewer, and it's something I've been using for all my classes. I love to code and I love to type out things that make me a more efficient writer. This is the benefit of computer science and English narration captured in its most fundamental form.

I have often stopped to remark that these things, while good and true often are not enough to satiate human desires, it would be interesting to comment on the feasibility of these tasks at the end of the day and what qualities are the most conducive for making such things like this possible.

The Emerson way would be to completely abandon social media altogether.

12 Emerson's weaknesses and addressing these weaknesses

Is nature if ideas inspire them? Are those ideas legitimate? What makes us say that these ideas are part of what we want to do or say?

13 Privileges

Broadly speaking, Emerson's ideas also attest to a fundamental aspect of human nature, which is our own inconceivable understanding of humanity.

Emerson writes that, "But do your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself." But what is this work that Emerson talks about?

In an ideal world, everybody is able to find meaning in the work that they do, deriving meaning from this work. We often think about professors, CEOs, and these sorts of individuals who are very much privileged people in the top echelon of society, but rarely do we consider the other half, that is, the people who are not at all positioned to think about their own lives.

However, only a certain number of people have the ability to work towards making this work a reality, and that itself is the infeasibility, the impossibility of Emerson's goals.

How can we best reconcile what Emerson is speaking? How Emerson is saying it? It is very much our own personal biases, judgments shrouding our ability to speak upon such matters, and that itself is often unsatisfactory. To understand these large philosophical studies and

14 Digital Self-Reliance

The notion of identity has become one that is intertwined with other aspects of other identity. This identity is one that is not solely divorced from other notions of what is right or wrong. The virtues that Emerson writes about is largely independent with that of other virtues. Chiefly speaking, our ideas on the world and how we are to mold it into our very own creation can be seen to be tangentially related to what we describe as the optimal virtue, a world where our efforts are largely independent with that of other students.

15 Meaningful Work in the Realm of Computational Thinking

The computers where we think about meaningful work is often ill-contrived. Not many people are well-maintained.

In “Deep Work,” Newport writes about how his work is entrenched in basic principles.

16 Nietzsche

Romantic quest has the genius vs. them the crowd, the others.

Celestial body. Stendhal’s Red and Black is Christian because it involves the fall. You read books, that’s why you find yourself more compatible. Then you fall in love. Several things must happen. There is definitely a falling away, falling from the natural habits according to your class standing, education, et cetera. Stories that are Biblical to their core.

How that rebellion takes place, the possibility of imminent critique. It’s not until late 60’s. There is another version of this, an idealistic person comes with a simple realization in the end. Understand the way things are run.

17 Bound

Spirited, Rational, Appetitive

Harmonic Development

Privatized Sublime

For Plato, his Republic is all the judgment plains. If he can approach every situation he is in.