Glory in Sport (and Elsewhere)

TIMOTHY CHAPPELL

> People seek honour both more than they should, and also less than they should; therefore, there is a right way to seek honour.
> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1125b20

I

There is a gap between what we think about ethics, and what we think we think about ethics.[1] This gap appears when elements of our ethical reflection and our moral theories contradict each other, or otherwise come into logical tension. It also appears when something that is important in our ethical reflection is sidelined, or simply ignored, in our moral theories. The gap appears in both ways with an ethical idea that I shall label *glory*. This paper's exploration of the idea of glory, and its place in our ethical reflection, is offered as a case-study of how far such reflection can diverge from what we might expect, if we suppose that actual ethical reflection usually or mostly takes the forms that might be predicted by moral theory. I shall suggest that this divergence tells against moral theory, and in favour of less constricted and more flexible modes of ethical reflection.

My terms 'ethical reflection' and 'ethical idea' are not meant to be especially freighted with technical meaning. Ethics as I understand it is the enterprise of thinking philosophically about the question 'How should life be lived?', and the further questions that this initial question generates; 'ethical' is the corresponding adjective. So 'ethical ideas' are the concepts which we centrally and distinctively deploy in thinking about these questions; and 'ethical reflection' is just reflection of an ethical kind.[2] I will often contrast 'ethical reflection' with 'moral

[1] Williams 1993, 7, 91.

[2] Hence my 'ethical reflection' is no close relative of Williams 1985 Chapter 9's 'reflection'. That is not a technical term either, but the point of Williams' usage is that reflection on our own ethical standards can lead to a corrosive scepticism about them, especially when we think about their histories. This is not my point here (and anyway, I doubt that Williams' reflection need be as corrosive as he imagines).

Nor do I mean by 'reflection' what many people mean by 'intuition': a

doi:10.1017/S1358246113000283 ©The Royal Institute of Philosophy and the contributors 2013

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

theory', by which I mean the project of constructing a deductive or quasi-deductive system for practical choice which, ideally, aims to justify and explain the largest possible number of particular phenomena by reference to the smallest possible number of general principles. My claim will not be that moral theory's characteristic methods and materials can or should *never* be used in ethical reflection. But it will be that ethical reflection at least often takes forms strikingly different from anything that is to be found in typical moral theories, and that one case where this is particularly obvious is the case of glory.

II

The notion of glory may, perhaps, be a neglected one in philosophy partly because of the notion's apparent religious overtones. Be that as it may, to say a little about what glory is is not to introduce a concept that we do not have, but to clarify the content and significance of a concept that we already use (whether or not 'we' are religious). In our society, the idea of glory – though not necessarily the word – is all around us; I doubt I have ever met anyone over the age of two who did not have the concept already. A concern with glory is central to our society's actual, though not always to its officially announced, values. For us glory is typically both an ethical *idea*, a concept that we use, and also an ethical *ideal*, a way of being that we aspire to. I shall have things to say about both the idea and the ideal, and about the connections between them, in this paper.

Glory is something that the sportsmen and sportswomen, the film stars and actors, the pop stars, celebrities, and 'personalities' who dominate our public life and discourse all typically aim at. (Not that they all aim at it all of the time, and under that very description, and wisely and well. Nor that they do not aim at other things also. More on this later.)

If we wanted a single word to show, at least to a first approximation, what is meant by glory, we might coin the word *hurrahability*. The word would be ungainly perhaps, but it would also be usefully ambiguous between three different ways of cashing out the English – *bility* suffix – as making hurrahs *warranted*, as making them *intelligible*, and as making them barely *possible*. The ambiguity is useful

---

quasi-perceptual capacity for 'just seeing' how things are ethically. Whether or not there is such a capacity, the idea that intuition in this sense is the only alternative to moral theory is an obvious straw man.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

because assenting to someone else's hurrah-response must mean counting it as warranted, and disagreeing with it must mean counting it as intelligible or possible but not warranted, or else as not even possible.

To use this new word well, we would need to put out of our minds one familiar conception of 'hurrah' now standard in moral theory, on which anything morally positive whatsoever merits a 'hurrah', and anything morally negative whatsoever merits a 'boo'. Obvious facts about our ordinary use of 'hurrah', and about the most usual notions of the morally positive, stand in the way of this equation.[3] It is a remarkable achievement of moral theory to have obscured these obvious facts from our view. The equation nicely illustrates how technical vocabularies are not necessarily more precise just because they are technical, indeed can even be less precise. In real life, when people do their mundane moral duty by, say, paying their taxes or writing their Christmas thank-you letters, our response is not 'hurrah' (not even a bit; not even *sotto voce*). These are morally positive actions, but there isn't even a hint of glory about them. Conversely, there are many things that *do* make us shout 'hurrah', many instances of glory, which are not so much morally negative as never normally evaluated at all (at least not by moral theorists). My discomfort with this anomaly, and with the neglect of the actual meaning of the exclamation 'hurrah' that seemed to lie behind it, was one of the things that got me thinking about glory as an ethical idea in the first place.

Alongside saying that 'glory is hurrahability', and as a way of elucidating it a little, we might also say that glory is a kind of *radiance*. There are actions, events, objects, people even, that have a kind of glow or aura about them, that are 'lit up from within' or that 'light things up'; it is this radiance that makes them hurrahable. Obviously to speak of radiance or aura is metaphorical, but it is hard to get beyond the metaphors, which are in any case deeply buried in the English and in many other languages: think of 'brilliant', 'star', 'outshine', 'splendid', 'luminary', 'lustre', 'illustrious', and the origins of these words where that is not manifest at once. What is glorious is

[3] For which perhaps we have originally to thank Hume's notoriously undifferentiated notion of 'the sentiment of approbation' (see Hume 1739, 614). The equation is reinforced in the writings of modern Humeans like Simon Blackburn (1985, 183); another ancestral influence is the basically undifferentiated notions of moral approval and disapproval that Ayer and Hare worked with. Russell (2006) is a modern Humean's defence of Hume's undifferentiated notion.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

what is *dazzling*. And when does this dazzle occur? We might put it, with a little formality, like this: glory is – typically – what happens when a spectacularly excellent performance within a worthwhile form of activity meets the admiration that it merits.

As we shall see in section IV of this paper, this formula will not cover everything that might be worth calling glory (hence my word 'typically'). In section VII, we will meet the suggestion that it does not even cover the most central and paradigm case of glory of all. Also, there are glory-*related* phenomena regarding which, though they are certainly excellent and admirable performances occurring within worthwhile practices, it seems too strong to speak of *glory* exactly. Admirable things can be admirably done – can be what Plato and Aristotle called *kalakagatha* – without being admirable enough, or spectacular enough, to count as glorious. Still, such phenomena are on the glory-*spectrum*, even if they are not towards the higher end of it where explicit glory-talk becomes natural, or more natural. And the formula does bring out three different ways of criticising claims that something is glorious. Most obviously, we can question whether a given performance really is spectacularly excellent.[4] But we can also doubt whether that performance, spectacularly excellent though it may be, meets the admiration that it merits. And again we can dispute whether a spectacularly excellent performance happens within a worthwhile form of activity.

This third kind of question is particularly interesting, given that so many of our society's most typical glory-ascriptions happen within forms of activity the worthwhileness of which is at least controversial. Perhaps there can't be glory in push-pin or pinochle, no matter how spectacular my performances in these trivial parlour games. But if we grant that, then maybe we must also dismiss the idea that there can be glory in, say, a cricket match or a rock concert – at least until we can prove the worthwhileness of rock concerts to dismissive classical music lovers, and the worthwhileness of cricket to Americans.

How, in general, are we to prove such worthwhileness claims? Here recall what Alasdair MacIntyre says about his notion of a 'practice' (1981, 193):

> What is distinctive in a practice is in part the way in which conceptions of the relevant goods and ends which the technical skills serve… are transformed and enriched by these extensions of

[4] What, for instance, if it fails? There can be glorious failures, no doubt – but presumably theirs is not a glory that anyone sane normally hopes for, and a different kind from the glory of the corresponding successes.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

human powers and by that regard for its internal goods which are partially definitive of each particular practice.

It is tempting to think that proving a practice worthwhile must be a matter of showing how it fits antecedently available standards and realises antecedently available goods. But with typical practices – and I think, on MacIntyre's definition,[5]=rock music and cricket *are* typical practices – this is precisely not what is involved. The whole point of the practice is that it creates its *own* standards of worthwhileness and goodness, standards which are internal to the practice and irreducible to any kind of external standards. The practice opens up for its practitioners ways of excelling, and so of flourishing, which would not exist – would not even be describable – without it. That is one reason why it is a mistake to fault practices like cricket, or rock music, or ballet, or the theatre for not feeding the hungry, say, or contributing to the economy. Whether or not such activities do feed anyone, or make any money, that is not what they are distinctively aimed at doing. They are aimed at achieving and exploring their own internal goods, which we have no good reason to think illusory just because they are not the same as some other goods, e.g. welfare and justice (to give two examples that have particularly interested moral theorists). If these activities fail to be worthwhile, it is because they fail to achieve their *own* goods, not because there are some other goods that they do not achieve; or because their own goods are indeed illusory goods – where, however, illusoriness must be more than mere difference from some other set of goods.

III

So glory can attach to spectacular performance within any activity which satisfies the conditions to count as a MacIntyrean practice. (In games which, e.g., lack the complexity to count as practices, perhaps something analogous to glory can still be found: when I dance triumphantly around the room after winning a family game

[5] MacIntyre's definition is this (1981, 187): 'By a "practice" I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of pinochle I am joking, but the point of my joke lies in the relation of this 'triumph' to real triumphs.) And appreciating this glory is a matter of appreciating the particular standards of performance that the practice itself generates. To understand why, for example, it could be called a glorious moment when Andrew Flintoff ran out Ricky Ponting in the Fifth Ashes Test in August 2009, you need to see much more than the breathtaking technical mastery involved – the lightning speed and accuracy of Flintoff's field and throw; you also need to know what, in general, a run-out is according to the rules of cricket, and why it matters to achieve one.

You also need to understand why, in particular, *this* was a good moment to achieve a run-out within this specific match. Alongside the aspects of the glory of Flintoff's run-out that are internal to the nature of the game of cricket, there are also narrative aspects, concerning the history of the game. ('Every practice has its own history': MacIntyre 1981, 194.) It matters, for example, that the background is a story about 120 years of cricketing rivalry between England and Australia, and it matters about the importance of this particular match within the 2009 series. (If they had won, Australia would have retained the Ashes.) There are also personal aspects to what happened, concerning the dramatic personae that Ponting and Flintoff had developed within that series as it unfolded: Ponting's alleged uptightness and dourness had made him (unfairly, I think) the bogeyman of the English crowd despite his playing extremely well, whereas the famously laddish and over-relaxed Flintoff was their talisman despite injuries that made him seriously under-perform both as a batsman and as a bowler. Against that background there was a delicious appositeness, what sports-writers like to mark with their favourite adverb 'ironically', in Flintoff's sudden appearance in his very last Test as Ponting's and Australia's nemesis. This element of appositeness, we might almost say of wit, contributed to the glory of the moment too.[6]

This brings out, not only how glory can have an essentially narrative structure, but also how it can be perspectival. English cricket fans

[6] Anthony O'Hear writes (personal communication): 'I was at the Oval, right behind [Flintoff] for that run-out… it was completely out of the blue – it looked an innocuous run until we saw the pick-up and stumps shattered with, as it seemed, one movement. And, we were feeling, not a moment too soon, as the bowling was getting nowhere at that stage, Ponting looking impregnable and in great nick, as indeed was Hussey, who was only got out at the end of the innings. 200 or so runs was looking ominously achievable, and some annoying Australians in front of us kept jumping up shouting "All day, mate!" So the "glory" moment was all the sweeter, particularly to round off a series we didn't really deserve to win.'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

like me cannot reasonably expect Australians to find the Ponting run-out quite as glorious as they do; as Australian friends have more or less said to me, the natural reaction for them is something like 'It's your party, mate, so enjoy it' (often with the acid addition 'while it lasts'). Nor would I expect an American (not even one who understood cricket) to see the glory that an English person may see in the moment of the Ponting run-out.

Similar remarks apply to a second and 'less trivial' example of glory, from politics. (Politics is not a game, but it is a MacIntyrean practice: it realises goods both internal and external to itself. If Aristotle could, anachronistically, be brought into this discussion, he would perhaps say that politics is the *arch*-practice, the practice which gives their point and place to all the other practices: *Politics* 1252a1–7.) This second example is Winston Churchill on the balcony of Buckingham Palace on VE Day, May 8 1945:

> The unconditional surrender of our enemies was the signal for the greatest outburst of joy in the history of mankind. The Second World War had indeed been fought to the bitter end in Europe. The vanquished as well as the victors felt inexpressible relief. But for us in Britain and the British Empire, who had alone[7] been in the struggle from the first day to the last and staked our existence on the result, there was a meaning beyond what even our most powerful and most valiant Allies could feel. Weary and worn, impoverished but undaunted and now triumphant, we had a moment that was sublime. (Churchill 1954, 439–40)

Churchill's glory on VE Day was not the glory of a particular performance that he was then engaged in: it was a cumulative or retrospective kind of glory, arising from his courageous and steadfast leadership over five and a half years of a war that Britain had initially looked almost certain to lose, and which it was vital for the Allies to win, not only for their own interests but for the future of the whole world. This is a perspective, and a narrative, that needed to be in place before a spectator in the Mall could fully grasp Churchill's sublime moment. German or Swiss spectators would not and could not have fully shared this perspective. If they knew all the background, they might fully have appreciated *why* the moment was glorious. They would still, in a sense, be seeing that glory from

[7] 'Alone'? Polish, Czech, Slovak, and French readers will dispute that. (In Prague I recently saw a memorial 'to the victims of the Second World War, 1938 to 1945'.)

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

outside – as a proposition about what others were experiencing rather than as an experience of their own.

These points about the perspectival nature of at least some glory might make it seem that glory is essentially a *reaction*, something inside us rather than in the world. Philosophical critics of a certain irrealist sort will very probably say that what I call glory is simply what happens in our emotions or attitudes when certain phenomena come our way.

Here the irrealist offers the suggestion that glory might be reducible to emotional reactions, as if that might be the full and complete story about what glory is. A realist will typically counter that glory is something entirely observer-independent, that glory-properties have to be out-there-in-the-world if they are to be anywhere at all: will talk, in short, as if he loses the argument if he admits that our emotions and reactions have *any* place in glory.

Both these positions seem, like many other positions that moral philosophers get themselves into, unnecessarily extreme and over-simplified positions. Maybe the truth about glory is that, for the full-blown form of the phenomenon, you need both glory-properties in the world and reactions in spectators – and above all, a *fit* between properties and reactions. But whether you need to be a realist to talk of this contrast between properties and reactions, or of reactions fitting or not fitting the properties in question, is not as obvious as it might seem. Intelligent irrealists about value typically think that they can make these moves too: that their theories allow for the possibilities of correctness-conditions for moral utterance, and of moral experience that is like experience of properties, and would fail as theories if they didn't.

IV

A different aspect of glory that needs to be brought out is glory's capacity to bestow meaning or significance on life – to 'make it all worthwhile'. Some connections between meaningfulness and glory may already be evident in my Churchill example. Perhaps the victorious crowds in front of Buckingham Palace felt inchoately that all the terrible sufferings and loss of the war years could be redeemed, some sense could be made of them, if this moment of glory was where, in the end, they led to.[8] (The converse certainly seems true: a defeated population's emotions are very likely to be dominated by the shame that is the opposite of the sense of glory, and by the confusion that

[8] I am grateful to Joss Walker for discussion of the Churchill example.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

is the opposite of the sense of significance.) Nietzsche's famous remark, in the Preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, that 'only as an aesthetic phenomenon are existence and the world justified', seems to be a related thought; seeing 'existence and the world' as beautiful is surely one way of seeing them as meaningful or worthwhile.

This connection between glory and meaningfulness comes out very clearly in another sporting example, at the end of Garrison Keillor's tale of the day Babe Ruth visited Keillor's fictional mid-west small-town of Lake Wobegon (Keillor 1989, 108):

> A true hero has some power to make us a gift of a larger life… He did something on that one day in our town that made us feel we were on the map of the universe, connected somehow to the stars, a part of the mind of God. The full effect of his mighty blow diminished over time, of course, and now our teams languish, our coaches despair. Defeat comes to seem the natural course of things. Lake Wobegon dresses for a game, they put on their jockstraps, pull on the socks, get into the colours, they start to lose heart and turn pale – fear shrivels them.
>
> Boys, this game may be your only chance to do good, he might tell them. You might screw up everything else in your life and poison the ones who love you, create misery, create such pain and devastation it will be repeated by generations of descendants. Boys, there's plenty of room for tragedy in life, so if you go bad, don't have it be said that you never did anything right. Win this game.

We might almost say that the sense of glory *is* the sense that significance (of one sort) has been achieved, that meaning (of one kind) has been brought into what was previously shapeless and unreconciled.

The greatest work on glory in the history of Western literature is also the first work in that history: Homer's *Iliad*. And there too, alongside a great deal about the glory of war and of sporting prowess[9] (it is pretty

[9] Simone Weil famously argues (Weil 1940) that the central theme of the *Iliad* is the horror with which force transforms its victims – and its perpetrators – into things, mere objects. No doubt that is *a* central theme of the poem. Yet the *Iliad*'s attitude to violence, unlike Weil's, is clearly not simply negative. It might equally be read as *celebrating* murder, mayhem, and mutilation, with a relish that is at least unhealthy and arguably pornographic. If there is something of Wilfred Owen in Homer's heroes, there is something of the Viking in them too. Another of the *Iliad*'s central themes is the honour and glory that can be won by force, whether in the 'artificial' context of sport, or in the overshadowing 'natural' context of the unending war. For Homeric warriors, such as the Trojan Sarpedon at *Iliad* 12.310–28, there is an obligation to fight in return for honour (*timê*), and *kleos* (posthumous

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

clear that Homer's contemporaries regarded war as a MacIntyrean practice), we find, on Helen's lips, the hope that glory might bring meaning (*Iliad* 6.356–358, my own translation):

> Zeus has laid a bad fate on Paris and me –
> Bitch as I am, blinded and wild as he is –
> That for ages to come we might be the matter of song.

Helen's one consolation too, in the miserable and hopeless position that she and Paris find themselves in, is her hope that some kind of posthumous glory will, as I put it above, 'make it all worthwhile', shed a retrospective glow of significance and beauty on the events surrounding her that somehow validates their horror. She redeems her *kakos moros*, she makes sense of her own and her lover's sordid misdeeds and terrible predicament, by 'foreseeing' the glorious and unforgettable epic – the *Iliad* itself – that they will become part of. And her claim to be unforgettable succeeds, simply by being unforgettable.

By the time we get to this example, our notion of glory no longer quite fits the initial characterisation that I gave in section II: the radiance or aura that typically attaches to a spectacularly excellent performance, within a worthwhile form of activity, when it meets the admiration that it merits. As Homer depicts her, Helen can lay claim to no performance that merits any admiration at all. Being abducted by Paris, thus triggering a bloody and brutal war that lasts ten years, hardly counts as a worthwhile form of activity. The glory that she hopes for is different, though it is not merely fame either; it is the

---

fame) is regularly the one consolation that Homeric heroes have for the imminent prospect of death and Hades: see particularly *Odyssey* Book 11. Again, the deputation of Greeks who go to persuade Achilles to return to the war find him in his tent, singing to the lyre the *klea andrôn* (*Iliad* 9.189), 'the famous deeds of men' – just what Homer was doing himself in reporting it. (Thanks to Chris Emlyn-Jones for discussion.)

One particularly notable context where Homer exploits the contrast between the glory of sport and the glory of war is the final duel between Hector and Achilles, where Hector turns and runs for his life, and Achilles chases him as if they are athletes in a race. But no ordinary race (*Iliad* 22.158–161, my own translation):

> A good man ran before, a great man after;
> And desperate fast, for their race had as prize
> No bull-hide relic such as athletes win:
> The prize they sprinted for was Hector's life.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

glory – the radiance and aura – of being *herself*, Helen, 'the face that launched a thousand ships'. Yet as W.B. Yeats understood, that too can be glory:

> That the topless towers be burnt
> And men recall that face,
> Move most gently if move you must
> In this lonely place.
> She thinks, part woman, three parts a child,
> That nobody looks; her feet
> Practise a tinker shuffle
> Picked up on a street.
> *Like a long-legged fly upon the stream*
> *Her mind moves upon silence*.

Sometimes, as with Helen, glory is *just* the radiance or aura I spoke of, without *any* relevantly connected performance. That may make it harder to state the correctness-conditions for ascriptions of glory, but it need not mean that the radiance in question is any less really glory, and it need not mean that glory of this sort is any less able to bestow significance on our lives.

Homer's concern with glory in the agonistic contexts of sport and war, and also beyond those contexts, is echoed throughout the later Greek tradition,[10] and in the other traditions that followed and inherited the Greeks'; including our own. When we think today about glory and shame, *kudos* and *aidôs*, in war or sport or elsewhere, we engage with an evaluative vocabulary that was perfectly intelligible twenty-eight centuries ago at the very beginning of our culture, and is no less intelligible to us now.

Yet even in the ancient world Homer's evaluative vocabulary was not without its critics; he himself seems to have been engaged, *inter alia*, in criticising the values presented in his epics. Of course the *Iliad* takes glory to be a central ethical *idea*, and I have argued that we do too. But there are the further questions whether the *Iliad* also take glory to be a central ethical *ideal* – something to be aimed

[10] Herodotus, for example, tells us in the first lines of his *Histories* that one of his reasons for writing is so that the exploits of Greeks and barbarians might not be *aklea*; and Eteocles' prayer, at Aeschylus, *Septem contra Thebas* 683–5, is not that he should avoid disaster, but that if disaster comes on him, it should come without shame (*aiskhynê*). 'The implicit definition of a Greek, as contrasted with a barbarian, becomes – a member of a community entitled to attend the Olympic Games.' (MacIntyre 1981, 138)

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

at and lived for – and whether we should. Or is it with glory as Falstaff says it is with honour?[11] Perhaps glory should not be an ethical *ideal* for us, something we pursue, because it is a bogus ethical *idea* – a mere word, a delusion, a sham concept? These questions turn our attention to the issue of how glory relates to ethics, and to moral theory. I turn to them now.

V

One argument against taking glory as an ethical ideal, which is already perfectly evident to any attentive reader of Homer, is that glory keeps bad company.[12] Tyrants and maniacs regularly appeal to glory, as Alexander, Napoleon, Hitler, Franco, Stalin, Mao, and Mussolini all famously did, to overwhelm our critical faculties and to justify their misdeeds. Isn't glory the propagandist's stock in trade? And doesn't that make it too debased a currency for any serious purpose?

One response to this first argument is the well-known Latin tag *corruptio optimi pessima*: the better something is, the worse its perversion. Appeals to glory are certainly the propagandist's stock in trade, but there is a reason for that: because appeals to glory, *where genuine and justifiable*, are a potent proof of value. That Goebbels misused the language of glory does not speak against glory, but against Goebbels. After all, Goebbels misused the language of justice too.

For related reasons, it is not a serious criticism of glory as an ethical ideal to point out – truly enough, of course – how ridiculous people can make themselves by pursuing it. Apparently, it is the ideal of glory that drives people to do things like going on reality TV; indisputably, most people who go on reality TV make complete fools of themselves. Sure, but sometimes people who are driven by the

[11] William Shakespeare, *Henry IV Part I*, Act 5 Scene 1, lines 131–140: 'Can honour set to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery then? No. What is honour? A word. What is in that word honour? Air – a trim reckoning! Who hath it? He that died a' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. 'Tis insensible then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it. Honour is a mere scutcheon – and so ends my catechism.'

This is not, incidentally, the only passage where Shakespeare has Falstaff parody Socrates; cp. the Hostess's account of Falstaff's death in *Henry V*, Act 2 Scene 3.

[12] Thanks in particular to Alex Miller for pushing me on the bad-company argument.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ideal of justice make complete fools of themselves too. Another Latin tag applies here: *abusus non tollit usum*, that a thing can be misused does not show that it has no good use.

What about the use of glory-talk to justify misdeeds? *Corruptio optimi pessima* and *abusus non tollit usum* apply to that too. For a different kind of challenge to the notion of glory, recall my initial characterisation of it in section II, as 'what happens when a spectacularly excellent performance within a worthwhile form of activity meets the admiration that it merits'. I pointed out in II how something can fail to be a worthwhile form of activity because it is trivial, like a simple parlour game, or perhaps completely pointless, like the collection of saucers of mud.[13] An activity can also fail to be worthwhile by being, not pointless, but *morally bad*. Spectacularly excellent performance in a wicked activity cannot be glorious, and wicked people, like Mao and Hitler, who claim glory are making a false claim.

But then (it might be argued), if moral goodness, or at any rate permissibility, is a necessary condition of glory, that must mean that assessments of whether something is or is not glorious are not themselves moral assessments, but some different kind of assessments to which moral assessments are only a preliminary. Hence – it could be said – glory, while it may be a value, cannot be counted a *moral* value.

If this argument worked, then so would the following: generosity cannot be a virtue, because I cannot exercise *true* generosity in morally bad ways, e.g. by giving away things which are not mine to give, or by being arbitrarily or capriciously generous. Moral permissibility is only a necessary condition of true generosity; therefore generosity, while no doubt a value, cannot be a *moral* value.

Both arguments fail, because the moral badness of bad generosity or wicked glory consists in some specific kind of immorality – injustice or the like. Hence generosity and glory are not shown to be outside the ethical domain, just because there are other ethical standards besides their own that apply to them. There can be more than one ethical standard, and what succeeds by one ethical standard, e.g. by being glorious, may fail by another, e.g. by being cruel.

Does this make the ethical domain too wide? As I said earlier, the ethical domain as I understand it includes all the questions that we distinctively ask and all the concepts that we distinctively use in inquiring how life should be lived. That certainly makes the ethical domain wider than it is for those who think, as moral theorists very

[13] Unless collecting saucers of mud has now become a peculiarly inscrutable philosophers' game, a little like Mornington Crescent perhaps.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

often have, that the ethical has to do with little more than obligation to others, or 'moral principles', or something like that. But, I suggest, this width is a good thing, because without it the ethical, and in particular obligation, is not intelligibly connected to anything else. Until we see our reason 'to be moral' (which in this context usually means: to be just or fair to others, even at the risk of loss to ourselves) in its proper relation to our other reasons, and in particular to those reasons that have to do with the question 'What can make life meaningful?', we will not see it at all. A life in which I simply fulfilled my obligations would be a Sisyphean one – unless fulfilling my obligations was somehow connected, for me, with meaning and significance. But if it is connected with those things, then it will be connected, directly or indirectly, with glory too. It is not for nothing that Rai Gaita concludes his discussion of a famous example of extraordinarily self-sacrificing behaviour in the unspeakably terrifying and sordid conditions of Auschwitz with the words: 'Charles's behaviour showed a goodness *to marvel at*' (Gaita 1991, xvii, my italics).

Thinking about glory can give us other reasons too to widen our conception of the moral. Moral theorists usually work with a dichotomy between moral and prudential reasons. Since glory is an ethical idea that does not seem to fit well on the moral side of this dichotomy, it tends to get put on the prudential side: glory must be a value my pursuit of which serves *my* turn, not anyone else's; and so, a self-interested value.[14] Thus the moral-prudential dichotomy is quickly equated with the altruistic-egoistic dichotomy, and from there it is but a short step to a series of charges that moralists down the centuries have routinely made against glory: that the motivation of glory is essentially *selfish*, that it turns us into rampaging egoists, feeds the wrong parts of our psyches, puffs us up with self-conceit and self-regard, prevents us from acquiring humility or self-knowledge, and so on.

One way to rebut these charges is simply to look at the evidence, from sport or the theatre for example, that glory can be a team achievement at least as easily as an individual one, or that for every

[14] Adkins' well-known contrast between 'cooperative' and 'competitive' values (1960, 7 ff.) is somewhere in between the normal moral/prudential contrast, and the contrast between obligation-based and glory-based values that I am drawing here. It is not the same as either of the other two contrasts, though it sometimes seems to have seduced Adkins himself into equating all three. For a critique of Adkins's competitive/ cooperative distinction see Long 1970, who rightly points out that many of the Homeric Greeks' most characteristic interests are not amenable to this distinction because they are about a glory that is achieved by *teamwork*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

great performer with a bloated ego, there is another whose feeling about her own achievements is something more like amazed gratitude, and a third who cannot stop beating herself up about all the things she *didn't* achieve.

Another and deeper way is to look more closely at the thought that actually motivates those who pursue glory.[15] Often their motivation, what they want when they act, is something like: 'that I should win this glorious victory', 'that I should achieve this spectacular achievement'. Such an agent's motivation essentially mentions him ('that *I* should win'). It is not enough, to fulfil his wish, that *someone* should win the victory or achieve the achievement. But it also essentially mentions the victory or achievement too. It is not enough, to fulfil his wish, that just anything agreeable should happen to him, or even just any victory or achievement: he wants *this* one. Furthermore, it is absolutely familiar that an agent working within some particular MacIntyrean practice should make great sacrifices in his pursuit of excellence in that practice. The more you look at the personal cost that can be involved in becoming, say, a great ballet dancer or novelist, the less it looks at all accurate to say that participation in such practices, since it cannot be classed as morally (and so altruistically) motivated, must be prudentially (and so egoistically) motivated. Perhaps, in most or maybe all MacIntyrean practices, the primary beneficiary is neither the agent nor the spectators, but the practice itself.

Thus the effect of thinking carefully and clearly about glory ought to be to break down the dichotomies between moral and prudential, altruistic and egoistic. It ought to help us to see that a lot of motivation is neither self-interested nor other-directed (which of course is not to say that such motivation cannot be criticisable either prudentially, or morally, or both). But this is not the only dichotomy traditionally observed by moral theorists to which glory suggests counter-examples. Two more familiar dichotomies come into view when we consider two more well-worn criticisms of glory. The first of these is that glory makes us pathologically dependent on the opinions of others. The second is that we should forget about glory and concentrate on what lies within the scope of our deliberate control: as it sometimes folksily put, that we should 'do our best and leave the rest'.

The idea that we should 'do our best and leave the rest' interestingly reflects a particular way of drawing the line between what we

[15] With the argument of this paragraph cp. Bernard Williams' distinction between the egoism/ altruism distinction, and the I-desire/ non-I-desire distinction: Williams 1973.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

are and are not responsible for (and indeed between what we are and what we are not). A philosopher is likely to say that the distinction it draws is a recognisably Kantian one, though behind Kant the distinction also has deep roots in the Christian tradition, particularly in its Protestant form.[16] The idea is that what I intentionally do is specially mine, expressive of me; everything else is in truth not really mine, or an expression of me, at all. I can control whether I perform well – or at least, I can control it up to a point. (Our need for this qualification, and our difficulty in exactly identifying the 'point' in question, are both revealing.) But I cannot control how others react to my good performance. Therefore, how others react can be of no moral concern to me. But glory as characterised in section II ('what happens when a spectacularly excellent performance within a worthwhile form of activity *meets the admiration that it merits*') essentially involves others' reactions. Therefore I cannot have a legitimate moral concern with glory.

But this sharp division between what I do and do not intentionally control is not the only possible division that we might make about responsibility. More to the point, it is not even the only actual division: 'we know that in the story of one's life there is an authority exercised by what one has done, and not merely by what one has intentionally done' (Williams 1993, 69). It is not that the intentional/unintentional distinction cannot do *any* work in ethical thinking about responsibility. But it is that that distinction cannot do *all* the work. One striking example of the absurdities that can result if we try to place too much weight on it comes when C.D. Broad is reviewing Ross, and citing Prichard as a further authority for a certainly false view about obligation that all three of them seem, bizarrely enough, to agree on:

> [I]n the strictest sense, a person cannot be under an obligation to produce any change which is not wholly within his power. Now the only change which it is wholly within an agent's power to produce is that mental change which Prichard calls "setting oneself to perform" an action. Whether this will produce the expected overt movements of one's own body depends on conditions which are out of one's power, though they are in fact generally

[16] Though not, interestingly enough, in the Calvinist school of Protestantism. Most Protestants (and a lot of Catholics) follow early/middle Augustine in making the will absolutely central to their accounts of responsibility and blame. The curious thing about Calvinism is the way in which it makes room for forms of blame and culpability that have to do with the whole shape of one's life pretty well *irrespective* of one's will. In this, no doubt, the Calvinists are rejecting early/middle in favour of late Augustine.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> fulfilled. And whether these bodily movements, if they take place, will produce the intended changes in the external world depends on conditions which are not only out of the agent's power but also may easily fail to be fulfilled. Hence, strictly speaking, no one is under an obligation to make any particular bodily movement, and *a fortiori* no one is under an obligation to make any particular change in the external world. (Broad 1940, 232)

If this is where a view about the intentional/unintentional boundary leads us to, then something has clearly gone wrong enough to make it worth reassessing the idea that there is any such thing (or at least, any sharp single boundary).

Related doubts about another familiar dichotomy – this time between independence and dependence – emerge when we think about the charge that glory makes our well-being pathologically dependent on the opinions of others. Here, at first sight, the problem seems to be one of misdirection: 'The object of well-directed activities is the things that are good in themselves; but the object of activities aimed at glory is *applause*; and applause is not a good in itself; so activities aimed at glory are not well-directed.' This argument fails, because its second premiss is false. There would indeed be something misdirected, perhaps even pathological, about a pursuit solely of applause. Come to that, there would be something misdirected about a pursuit solely of merited applause. But a pursuit of glory is not the same as either.

Think of the fantastic goal that is scored – but in an empty stadium; or of the marvellous opera that is composed – but never performed; or indeed, somewhat closer to home, of the wonderful philosophy paper that is written – but no one ever reads it. The whole point of writing philosophy papers is that they should be read; the whole point of composing operas is that they should be performed. We can imagine variants of these activities which do not, as they do, constitutively involve the expectation of uptake. But such variants would be precisely that – variants, a different kind of activity. (A kick-a-bout in an empty stadium, however skilful and intricate it may be, remains a different kind of activity from a cup final; a 'philosophy paper' written only for the eyes of REF or tenure assessors or as a try-out to clarify one's own ideas is, arguably, not really a philosophy paper at all.) The kinds of activity in which we seek glory have a reference to an audience – in some cases perhaps only a single person, in other cases necessarily more[17] – constitutively built into them.

[17] As Hallvard Fossheim has helpfully reminded me, glory is constitutively inter-personal, not only in the sense that there are two parties (agent

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Doesn't that mean that it's impossible to aim at glory *without* aiming at applause? The only honest answer to that seems to be Yes. But this answer does not mean that, in these cases, aiming at glory necessarily exhibits a pathological dependence on the opinions of others. Here as with section III's question whether the real existence of glory is in reactions or in properties in the world, what we need is a combined account. When I give a philosophy talk, my objective can be two things combined: that I should give a brilliant talk, and that my audience should respond to it as a brilliant talk. Certainly there would be something pathological about me if I aimed only at the audience-response. (Something like this is what goes wrong in the cult of fame and celebrity.) A philosopher who reads out an hour's worth of the phone-book to his seminar audience, and then is *pleased* when they cheer his nonsense to the echo, is a sick man. But surely there would also be something pathological about him if he cared only about the quality of his talk, and was utterly indifferent to the response (if any) of his audience (if any). A philosophy talk is a performance of a particular kind. Essentially, performances of that kind are aimed at audiences. When his audience is absent in body or in spirit, or fully present but gives an inapposite response (either way), something has gone wrong: part of the good he aimed at has not been achieved.

There is an interesting parallel here with some familiar arguments about pleasure. Philosophical hedonists often talk as if all I can be aiming in any activity is the pleasure that it produces, and as if it would be an unnecessary over-complication of theory to think about the activity too; philosophical anti-hedonists often suggest that the only thing I should aim at is the completion of the activity, perhaps even that there is something morally corrupt about me if I am interested in any separable resultant pleasure as well. I suspect that here also both sides of the question are over-simplifying and exaggerating, and that the truth lies in a more moderate and more complex combined account. The point of these activities is *both* that some performance should be completed, *and* that pleasure should be found in that performance. When I go for a walk in the hills, I want to complete the walk. But I also want it to be pleasurable

---

and audience), but also because, at least in many cases, the (proper) audience is irreducibly a plurality of people, and the individuals in this plurality are reacting not only to the agent, but also to each other. There are interesting complexities here, including the complexities about the psychology of crowds that Elias Canetti famously explored.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

rather than unpleasant, which is not the same thing (not even an adverbial aspect of the same thing; there is nothing adverbial about blisters or pulled muscles). There would be something pathological about only wanting the pleasure and not caring about the walk, but there would be something equally pathological about only wanting the walk and not caring about the pleasure. Just likewise with the components of glory, if we take these to be spectacular performance and condign applause: something goes wrong if you only aim at the applause, but something also goes wrong if you only aim at the performance. Hence it is also true that aiming at glory need not be self-defeating, provided you aim at both of these constituents; just as (*pace* the 'paradox of hedonism') aiming at pleasure need not be self-defeating, provided pleasure is not all you aim at.

It follows that aiming at glory (like almost everything else we do, in fact) does necessarily involve us both in dependence on others, and in concern with factors which are – 'strictly speaking', if you follow Broad – beyond our intentional control. Composing a splendid opera, running out the Australian cricket captain at the key moment, doing all that is necessary to bring about the hour of victory on the Palace balcony, or scoring a beautiful goal is only part of what I need for glory; amongst other things, I need the reactions of others – the *right* reactions of others – as well. The involvement of the audience in the play or the crowd in the Cup Final constitutes those as different sorts of events from the dress rehearsal or the kickabout in the empty stadium. It is a cliché of sport that the roar of the crowd gets the players' adrenalin going, and a cliché of theatre that the finest performances constitutively involve the audience. It is a cliché about clichés that clichés are clichés for the solid, if rather boring, reason that they are true. Here then we find dependence; but *pathological* dependence? Only if it is pathological for humans to depend on each other at all.

Among the many philosophers and moral theorists who in one way or another have wrongly rejected various sorts of human dependence – one thinks at once of Nietzsche, Augustine, Sartre, Hobbes – it is curious to note Aristotle. How odd that the philosopher who has come closest (though not *that* close) to a positive account of at least one aspect of glory in his discussion of *megaloprepeia* (*Nicomachean Ethics* IV.2, 1122a–b), should also be the philosopher who claims that well-being consists in complete *autarkeia*, freedom from dependence (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1097b8).[18] But human life begins and

[18] Aristotle expresses his reservation about the dependence involved in glory most clearly when he writes that honour, *timê,* 'seems to be more in those who honour than in him who is honoured; but our intuition is that

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ends in physical dependence, with a great deal of social interdependence in between (MacIntyre 1999), and its goods are necessarily fragile (Nussbaum 1986). How could this possibly be news?

VI

Thinking about glory, and about the objections that those well-versed in moral theory are likely to put to glory, either as an ethical idea or as an ethical ideal, has shown us how glory undermines some of the most characteristic dichotomies of moral theory: moral/prudential, altruistic/egoistic, within/beyond intentional control and obligatory/non-obligatory, independent/dependent. Another objection that might be put to glory suggests another challenge to a dichotomy dear to moral theory. This objection is that glory is *unfair*. Glory is undemocratic, because it makes one person the centre of attention for everyone else in a way that cannot be generalised – or as I almost said, universalised.

True, under most imaginable acceptable organisations of any complex society there will be quite a few different kinds of glory available, so that more people than you might at first expect can get their Warholian fifteen minutes of fame. True, but banal. And more importantly, this response ducks the deeper question why anyone should expect glory to be fair, democratic, universalisable etc. in the first place. Paradigmatically, glory arises when an extraordinarily spectacular performance or action or state or event or result (…), achieved within a worthwhile practice, is greeted with the extreme

---

the good is something of one's own, and not easily taken away' (NE 1095b25–27). Aristotle evidently means that *timê* is easily taken away *because* it is 'more in those than honour than in him who is honoured'. Even if this is true, another point is also true. This is that once I *have been* honoured, that honour is (typically) mine 'for keeps'. As people say to champions and to sporting and other heroes, 'You've done this, and *no one can take it away from you*'.

Aristotle's relation to the idea of glory is interesting, and interestingly different from many other philosophers in the canon because of his non-relation to the Christian tradition (of which he is not even a precursor, not at least in the distinctive way that Plato is: see below). In his ethical thinking glory is closely linked with his very central ideal of *megalopsychia*, nobility – another ethical idea that we too unquestionably think important, whether or not we think we think it important. I hope to write about nobility too some time soon.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

enthusiasm that it warrants. In the nature of the case only a minority of things can be extraordinarily spectacular. So in the nature of the case only a minority of things can be glorious. And the closer we approach the paradigm, the smaller this minority is likely to be. The very structure of the concept of glory entails a kind of partiality; and as we know from elsewhere, e.g. the debate about moral demandingness, partiality is something that moral theory has usually struggled with. In the long-running ethical debate over demandingness, ethicists today are – perhaps – getting closer to admitting that one sort of partiality might be a basic given in the moral life. Reflection on the ideal of glory ought, I suggest, to prompt them to admit another sort of partiality as well. As these kinds and instances of partiality multiply, so we will move that bit further away from moral theory's usual picture of a deliberative world organised around a unique, monotonic, and indeed monotone ranking of impartial obligations. And a good thing too.

That was a point about what happens when things go right with glory: when there *is* something extraordinarily spectacular, and it *is* greeted with the extreme enthusiasm that it warrants by the audience that it deserves. A second way of reading 'glory is unfair' is as the objection that things don't go right nearly often enough. As a matter of fact (this objection says), in a world like ours, wonderful performances and achievements are routinely ignored, and hopelessly bad ones routinely lionised. Not just some but most excellence goes unrewarded, most charlatanry unexposed; the brilliant philosophy articles get rejected for stupid reasons, the dull-as-ditchwater articles get published for even stupider reasons. What Hamlet calls 'the insolence of office and the spurns That patient merit of the unworthy takes' are everywhere. And I am not just thinking of Simon Cowell.

On its own this point does not prompt much more of a response than 'Tough'. Could it also, more interestingly, be made a premiss of an argument for rejecting the whole idea of glory, for withdrawing from the whole glory-institution, as intrinsically and ineliminably unfair *in toto*? Perhaps it could; perhaps that is part of what some of glory's extremer critics may have been getting at; Thomas à Kempis is not far away here – and neither is Nietzschean *ressentiment*. But if we go that way, we need to go it open-eyed. Glory is a deeply-rooted human phenomenon, as deeply-rooted as, for example, the promising institution, or the buying-and-selling institution. The twentieth century has shown that it is not impossible to tear out and replace whole areas of our social world in the name of equality or fairness. It has also shown the exorbitant cost of doing that, and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

how little reason there usually is to prefer the replacements that it leads to.

VII

The dichotomies that we have seen challenged by the idea of glory – moral/prudential, altruistic/egoistic, controlled/uncontrolled, independent/dependent, and lastly impartial/partial – all have a similar ancestry; they all arise in both of the two great traditions of otherworldliness that lie at the foundations of our culture, Platonism and Christianity. Not every Christian or Platonist has been completely hostile to glory. But there are signs of such hostility in the founders of both traditions: Jesus avoids the crowds lest they should make him king (John 6.15), and when Socrates' friend Agathon wins the drama competition, Socrates keeps away from his house for a day 'from fear of the crowd' (*phobêtheis ton okhlon, Symposium* 174a8). And the traditions' convergences on this topic of glory are striking. Both traditions alike tend to say that glory is a false ideal because it makes us self-centred and proud, and prevents us from possessing the Christian virtue of humility or the Socratic virtue of self-deprecating self-knowledge;[19] glory makes us care about what we cannot control, makes our well-being pathologically dependent on the opinions of others, and makes us unfairly exalt some at the expense of others; above all, glory distracts us from what really matters.

So what does really matter, according to the Platonist or the Christian? Strikingly enough the answer, for both the Platonist and the Christian, itself involves glory – just a different kind of glory:

[19] Notice how close these two virtues are. Too much has been made of the idea that the pagan Greeks had nothing corresponding to the Christian concept of humility. The Christian virtue is basically an ability to see how small one's own place in the universe really is, correcting for our usual egocentric bias. In the pagan Greek tradition – of which Socrates, in this respect at least, is typical – self-knowledge, *sôphrosynê*, and *aidôs* in the sense of modesty cover much the same conceptual space. Certainly deliberate self-abasement of the kind found e.g. in the *Imitatio Christi* is foreign to pagan Greek ethics; with the striking exception of Plato *Laws* 716a, *tapeinotês*, 'lowliness', is usually condemned even as an attitude to God, e.g. by Plutarch, *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* 1101e. But then plenty of Christian writers have argued that such self-abasement is foreign to Christian ethics too, because pathological, or dishonest, or both. However, humility is a subject for another paper.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> Evil can have no place with divinities, so it is bound to haunt this world and mortal nature; hence we must try to fly from this world to the divine world as fast as possible. And that flight is the process of becoming like God as far as we can – "becoming like" meaning becoming just and holy, together with wisdom. (Plato, *Theaetetus* 176a7–b2; my own translation)

> If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. (St Paul, *Colossians* 3.1–4, KJB; the word of Paul's which is here translated by "glory" is *doxa*, not the Homeric *kleos*)

St Paul is explicit, and Plato implies,[20] that Christians and Platonists are not *opponents* of glory after all. They just have a different, and radically otherworldly, conception of what glory is from those, such as Homer, whom they criticise. The highest and most pre-eminent example of glory is divinity itself. So, it might seem, glory is something we can only contemplate; there is nothing we can do to achieve it. The thought that it would be a presumptuous tempting of God even to try to achieve glory for ourselves is one that has deep roots in both the Greek and the Judaeo-Christian traditions: 'Not unto us, o Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name's sake give the glory' (Psalm 115.1, KJV).

And yet both Christians and Platonists say that human goodness is ultimately about *homoiôsis theôi*: attaining the likeness of divinity.[21] And by this they do not just mean passively contemplating divine being. They also mean actively engaging in human doings that in one way or another refract and reflect the glory of divine being. For Christian and Platonist alike, what it *is* for human doings to be glorious, is for them in some way to do this reflecting and refracting. As St Paul puts it (*2 Corinthians* 3.18, JB):

[20] For something more explicit from Plato, see his descriptions of the Platonic heaven at *Republic* 514a ff., *Symposium* 210a ff., and *Phaedrus* 246a ff.

[21] For more on this theme in Plato see Sedley 1999; and in Christianity, see Adams 1999, Chapter 1, Section 3. 'Be imitators (*mimêtai*) of God, therefore, as dearly loved children, and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God' (*Ephesians* 5.1–2, NIV).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> And all of us, with our unveiled faces like mirrors reflecting the image (*eikona*) of the Lord's glory (*doxan*), are being transformed into the image that we reflect in brighter and brighter glory (*apo doxês eis doxan*).

Rather similarly, at *Timaeus* 37d8 Plato famously calls time a moving image of eternity (*eikô kinêton tina aiônos*); and apparently part of what he means by the phrase is that the things of time have it in their nature to imitate the things of eternity – insofar as such imitation is consistent with their nature as things of time.[22]

Seen in this way, as derivative from the divine glory, the glory that is attainable in this life can easily become something that, for both Christians and Platonists, matters intensely. It matters to Plato in the *Apology* to vindicate Socrates; and vindicating Socrates does not just mean vindicating him in the abstract, it means vindicating him *to Plato's contemporaries*. The New Testament insists that, while what Christians do in this world may not be the most important thing, it is still important to live in the here and now in a way that not only manifests the glory of God in some objective sense (whatever sense that might be), but also does so in a way that those around the believers *actually recognise* as manifesting God's glory.

Having said that, both for the Christian and for Platonist the contemplation of the divine being always remains our primary route to glory; any kind of action that we can do will always only be glorious in a secondary sense. Ultimately, Christian and Platonist will say, seeing is worth more than doing, and this for an obvious reason: because the most glorious thing that we could ever do could never be as glorious as the most glorious thing that we can ever see.

Perhaps the basic thought here is that it does us a great deal of good to find something good enough to deserve to be worshipped by us – if only we can. Earlier in the paper I spoke of the danger of having our critical faculties overwhelmed by blaring propaganda. But perhaps there can be a danger, too, in *not* having our critical faculties

[22] *Timaeus* 37c6-d8: 'When the father who had brought it into being saw that [the universe] was in motion and alive, and had become the delight [or 'the statue': *agalma* is ambiguous] of the eternal gods, he was pleased, and in his delight conceived a plan to make it even more similar to its paradigm [the world-soul]. So just as the paradigm of the universe is alive and eternal, so likewise he did as much as he could (*eis dunamin epekheirêse*) to make this universe (*tode to pan*) of the same nature. However, the nature of the world soul turns out to be eternal; and this property could not be fitted in full measure (*pantelôs*) to what has come to be. So his plan was to make it a kind of moving image of the eternal…'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

overwhelmed, on those occasions (of course they may be rare) when overwhelmed is just what our critical faculties ought to be: 'Is there not, in reverence for what is better than we, an indestructible sacredness?'[23] You do not need to be a theist – let alone a Christian or a Platonist – to think that there might be situations where it is appropriate to be overwhelmed. Perhaps you only need to be a mountaineer:

> Toward four o'clock in the morning we returned to Glen Etive. Our most sanguine expectations had been met; our eyes feasted and our hearts elated. We had set out in search of adventure; and we had found beauty… What more may we fairly ask of mountains? …Something in that night cried out to us, not low nor faltering, but clear, true, urgent – that this was not all: that not half the wonder had pierced the clouds of our blindness: that the world was full of a divine splendour, which must be sought within oneself before it could be found without: that our task was to see and to know. (Murray 1947, 226)

VIII

Looking back over the main argument of this paper, some readers might still want to object as follows. 'If all this is right, then perhaps you have shown that not all values can be partitioned between the moral and the prudential, and that glory does not fit this dichotomy (and maybe doesn't fit some other dichotomies either). That still doesn't mean that glory is a moral value. Indeed it means that it *isn't* a moral value.'

This is certainly true, if by 'moral value' the reader means 'value closely tied to the institutions of moral obligation, moral praise, and moral blame', as justice and benevolence usually are. It is quite true that our idea of glory isn't closely linked to those institutions. There is the interesting fact that glory involves (at least rough) analogues of moral praise and blame: think of what we say about an international rugby-player who drops the ball two feet from an undefended try-line. But these are *analogues* of moral praise and blame, not the very same things. (Contrast 'He really shouldn't have dropped that pass' with 'He really shouldn't have punched that spectator'. The first does not license 'He was *wrong* to drop that pass', as the second licenses 'He was wrong to punch the spectator'. The most it licenses is 'It was *bad play* to drop that pass', which is not quite the same thing.)

[23] Carlyle 1838, Book 1, Chapter 2.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

It's also true, if by 'moral value' the reader means 'the sort of value that moral theorists have typically talked about'. Glory is obviously not a value that moral theorists have discussed much; that, of course, is one of my reasons for discussing it here. Indeed it is an interesting question whether typical moral theories today even *could* discuss it much without becoming quite atypical.

> For any man brought up in a western democratic society the related concepts of duty and responsibility are the central concepts of ethics; and we are inclined to take it as an unquestionable truth, though there is abundant evidence to the contrary, that the same must be true of all societies. In this respect we are all Kantians now. (Adkins 1960, 2)

Despite the well-known protests of Susan Wolf, Michael Stocker, Bernard Williams, Alasdair MacIntyre, and others, the situation in academic moral theory has not changed fundamentally in the fifty years since Arthur Adkins wrote these words. (More to the point, moral theory keeps reverting back to the criticised form, no matter how often and how thoroughly that form is criticised: an interesting symptom of hidden forces at work.) The keynote of typical moral theory remains the earnest, dowdy, plodding pursuit of unendingly exigent obligations. Whatever else moral theory may offer us, the life of fulfilling our obligations cannot be a *glorious* way to live. Indeed it is hard to see how glory can have much place at all in the moral theorist's picture.

One reason why not is because of what, following Bernard Williams, we might call the purity of morality – a phenomenon I touched on above in section V: 'The purity of morality… expresses an ideal, presented by Kant… in a form that is the most unqualified and also one of the most moving: the ideal that human existence can be ultimately just… it will be no good if moral value is merely a consolation prize you get if you are not in worldly terms happy or talented or good-humoured or loved. It has to be what ultimately matters' (Williams 1985, 195).[24] The one case where we might

[24] For Socrates' role in the emergence of this ideal of purity, see Adkins 1960, 155–6: 'Megara says significantly that death is a terrible thing, but to die in a manner which would give her enemies the opportunity to mock would be a greater evil than death [Euripides, *Hercules Furens* 281 ff.]… Until Socrates, no one takes a firm stand and says "Let them mock". It cannot be done: if others' opinion is overtly the standard, and if one's beliefs about the nature of life support that standard, it is both logically and psychologically impossible to set one's own views against it.' For one instance of Aristotle's general rejection of the Socratic/Platonic purity of morality, see Aristotle's brisk words, on the virtue of *megaloprepeia*, at

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

expect moral theory to allow there to be something like glory is the case of strictly *moral* heroism: the case of a heroic fulfilment of our moral duties. But even there, there is no glory in the sense that I have defined. The only thing that can matter for a moral theorist is just the heroic duty-fulfilment itself. Any applause or approbation that comes the moral hero's way in recognition of his exploits – being beyond his control, something which makes him dependent on others, prudentially valuable, and partial – is a strictly adventitious matter, of no *moral* value whatever. (The applause might of course have prudential value.[25] Indeed given, once more, the exhaustiveness of the moral/prudential dichotomy for typical moral theory, it will have to have prudential value if it has any value at all.) This makes it impossible for typical moral theory to accommodate glory in the sense I have meant, as the good that we get in a *combination* of spectacular performance and due recognition; typical moral theory is bound to split this phenomenon in two. But splitting it in two means not recognising it at all.

This point is aptly illustrated in *The Methods of Ethics*. Much in Henry Sidgwick's writings is a sign of something. His brief and discouraging remarks on fame in the Introduction to the *Methods* are a sign of how readily such an ethical idea as glory can become invisible within modern moral philosophy's characteristic outlook – an outlook which Sidgwick himself of course did much to create.

> Many men sacrifice health, fortune, happiness, to Fame; but no one, so far as I know, has deliberately maintained that Fame is an object which it is reasonable for men to seek for its own sake. It only commends itself to reflective minds either (1) as a source of Happiness to the person who gains it, or (2) a sign of his Excellence, moral or intellectual, or (3) because it attests the achievement by him of some important benefit to society, and at the same time stimulates him and others to further achievements in the future: and the concept of "benefit" would, when examined, lead us again to Happiness

---

Nicomachean Ethics 1122b: 'a poor person could not be *megaloprepês*, and anyone who tries is a fool'.

[25] Or, as Sidgwick suggests in the main-text quotation, it might be morally good instrumentally speaking. The instrumental good/final good distinction is another of moral theory's favourite dichotomies. Like the rest of them, it is rather too simple to fit all that much of real life very accurately, which is no doubt why the dichotomy's originators, Plato and Aristotle, use it fairly sparingly (though in Aristotle's case, arguably not sparingly enough).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> or Excellence of human nature, – since a man is commonly thought to benefit others either by making them happier or by making them wiser and more virtuous. (Sidgwick 1907, 9)

In the first place Sidgwick does not talk about glory in the sense I have defined, as something that essentially conjoins outstanding achievement and recognition. He talks here only about the recognition part of glory, which he calls 'Fame'. (Sidgwick's capitalisations are usually a sign of something, too.) Then he identifies just three ways in which 'Fame' might have appeal to (as he says) 'reflective minds', a phrase which it is tempting to interpret as 'minds that share Sidgwick's will to system'. And then (Sidgwick tells us, in a manner which, perhaps deliberately, almost parodies Aristotle's[26]), the third of these ways of appealing turns out to be a rather creaky conjunction of the first two ways, which are the appeals of 'Happiness' and 'Excellence'. It is obvious already what *these* capitalisations stand for: we are moving already towards Sidgwick's famous dualism of practical reason, on which the only fundamental question about anything taken to be a value is whether its value is really 'prudential' (and so self-interested) or 'moral' (and so altruistic). I have been arguing that glory is a distinctive kind of ethical idea in its own right, something that should be understood as itself rather than analysed into some other thing. Sidgwick's own emerging architectonic already forces him to deny this, and to treat someone who ostensibly aims at glory as 'really' aiming confusedly at an amalgam of the self-interested and the altruistic. The diagnosis is unconvincing and contrived, and much redescriptive patching will be needed to keep it afloat. Here as elsewhere, the effect of moral theory's schematisms is not neatness and simplicity but mess, adhockery, and complication.

Whenever the temptation to count glory as a self-interested value returns – and return it unfailingly will, given the way our tradition of moral theory has gone – it is vital to keep reminding ourselves what glory is, and what it is not. At least as I have used the word here, 'glory' means the radiance or aura that typically arises from the achievement of something spectacularly excellent, within the framework of some worthwhile practice, together with the acclaim that that achievement merits from the audience that it deserves. 'Glory' in my sense does not mean the acclaim on its own, or the thirst for that acclaim. Nor does it mean childish attention-seeking, self-regard or conceit, or the obsession with status and recognition-level that

[26] Sidgwick 1907, xxii: "So this was the part of my book first written (Book iii, Chaps. i–xi), and a certain imitation of Aristotle's manner was very marked in it at first, and though I have tried to remove it where it seemed to me affected or pedantic, it still remains to some extent."

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

might lead someone in an idle moment (or is this just *my* dirty little secret?) to google his own name to see how many hits he gets. Such states of character are pathological, certainly. But they have nothing necessarily to do with what I mean by glory.

Thoughtful and focused ethical reflection, reflection on Socrates' great question in what way life ought to be lived (*Republic* 352d), has plenty to tell us about the importance of glory as an idea and an ideal that people can, and often do, make central to their schemes of life, and in particular see as a key source of significance and meaning for their lives. Exploring the content of such reflection brings out some of the ways in which activities and projects that are directed at glory, such as a career in the theatre or in sport, normally seem to us perfectly intelligible parts of the pursuit of human well-being. What is striking about so much academic moral theory today is how little, by contrast, it typically says to make the value of glory intelligible, and how little it *could* say about glory without changing – e.g. by shedding, or at the very least more carefully nuancing, a succession of characteristic dichotomies – into something quite different. I venture to suggest that this change might even be a good thing.[27]

Faculty of Arts, The Open University,
t.chappell@open.ac.uk

References

Adams, Robert (1999) *Finite and Infinite Goods* (Oxford: Clarendon).
Adkins, Arthur (1960) *Merit and Responsibility* (Oxford: Clarendon).
Blackburn, Simon (1985) *Spreading the Word* (Oxford: OUP).
Broad, C. D. (1940) Critical Notice of W. D. Ross *Foundations of Ethics* (Oxford, 1939). *Mind* **49** (April 1940), 228–39.

[27] For helpful discussions of Homer, I am grateful to Chris Emlyn-Jones. For encouragement to get this paper written I am particularly grateful to Valerie Tiberius (no less than eight years ago) and to Liz Ashford and Hallvard Fossheim (more recently). Thanks also for written comments to Angelo Campodonico, Paul Davis, and Naoko Yamagata; and to Darragh Byrne, Gideon Calder, Ken Jones, Alexander Miller, Joe Morrison, Yujin Nagasawa, Anthony O'Hear, Joss Walker, and other members of audiences in the Royal Institute of Philosophy Lecture Series 2010 in Birmingham, and at the British Association for Philosophy of Sport in Cardiff, March 2010. Of course it goes without saying that the resultant paper is nobody's fault but my own.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Canetti, Elias (1981) *Crowds and Power* (London: Penguin). [Originally *Masse und Macht*, Hamburg 1960.]
Carlyle, Thomas (1838) *The French Revolution* (London: Chapman and Hall).
Churchill, Winston (1954) *Triumph and Tragedy* (Volume VI of his *The Second World War*) (London: Cassell).
Gaita, Raimond (1991) *Good and Evil: an absolute conception* (Second edition 2004) (London: Routledge, 1991).
Hume, David (1739) *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (eds) L. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978).
Keillor, Garrison (1989) *We Are Still Married* (London: Faber and Faber).
Long, A. A. (1970) 'Morals and Values in Homer', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* **90**, 121–130.
MacIntyre, Alasdair (1981) *After Virtue: a Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth).
Alasdair, MacIntyre (1999) *Dependent Rational Animals: why Human Beings need the Virtues* (London: Duckworth).
Murray, W. H. (1947) 'The evidence of things not seen' 222–7 in Murray, *Mountaineering in Scotland* (London: Dent).
Nussbaum, Martha (1986) *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: CUP).
Russell, Paul (2006) 'Moral sense and virtue in Hume's ethics', 158–170 in T. Chappell (ed.), *Values and Virtues* (Oxford: OUP).
Sedley, David (1999) 'The ideal of godlikeness', in G. Fine (ed.), *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul* (Oxford: OUP).
Sidgwick, Henry (1907) *The Methods of Ethics [1874]*, Seventh Edition. (London: Macmillan).
Stocker, Michael (1998) 'The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories', in R. Crisp and M. Slote (eds) *Virtue Ethics* (New York: OUP), 66–78.
Weil, Simone (1940) 'The Iliad, or the Poem of Force', originally published as 'L'Iliade, ou le poème de la force', *Cahiers du Sud* Dec. 1940/ Jan. 1941; reprinted in *Chicago Review*, 18:2 (1965), 5–30, tr. Mary McCarthy.
Williams, Bernard (1973) 'Egoism and altruism', in his *Problems of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP), 250–265.
Williams, Bernard (1985) *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Penguin).
Williams, Bernard (1993) *Shame and necessity* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press).
Susan, Wolf (1982) 'Moral saints', *The Journal of Philosophy*, August 1982, 419–439.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246113000283 Published online by Cambridge University Press