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The Great Man

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1. *Introduction*

Two thirds of the title for this paper was chosen for poetic reasons. Although this enquiry is called “The Great Man”, the enquiry is neither about some particular man, nor is it about a man; but the phrase is both terse and impactful which can count for much more than accuracy. By “man” I refer to all human beings, irrespective of their age or sex. By “the” I do not mean to indicate specificity, for this paper is about greatness for humans *in general*. The word “great” is the only word in the title which has its standard meaning. By “great” I mean what we normally understand by the term “great”; and the whole of Chapter One is dedicated to informing the reader as to what his normal understanding of it is.

The purpose of this paper is to enrich and clarify our understanding of greatness in people. Our discussion will culminate in a theory on greatness which, I will assert, is the one true theory of greatness; but this assertion is only for the sake of structure and drama. Since very little work has been done by philosophers on the subject of greatness in people, this paper is meant to open up the topic and to raise more questions than to give answers. A rational consideration of greatness is called for and, whilst performing such a consideration, we turn and twist and poke and prod the concept. In doing so, I hope to discover various aspects of greatness in men which we had never focused on before.

Because we are engaging in a philosophical enquiry, I will use rational argument, but although the arguments will aim for a conclusion the *purpose* of arguing will be to increase our understanding of the topic. Many of the arguments which I give are arguments with conclusions that oppose the majority of what I write, but they help us see greatness from a different angle, so I let

them stay even though they fail. This paper will make many claims without argument. These are not intended to be stipulations or hand-wavings. These bold claims are either claims that I think we already believe but have never made explicit, so when they are presented to us we will immediately assent to them; or they are intended to provoke thought by presenting an unusual position on a subject.

The first chapter focuses on clarifying the topic and setting the groundwork for an in depth discussion on greatness in people. It examines how we use the word great, the kinds of things which can be great, how greatness comes in degrees; it also attempts to identify and banish various common confusions we have when thinking about greatness.

The second chapter, entitled "Greatness and Admiration", deals with the ways in which greatness relates to admiration. Once I have dismantled the concept of admiration I show that admiration is the proper attitude to have towards things which are great, and then I suggest that that which is great and that which ought to be admired are one and the same.

There are various rights and duties which obtain when men have different degrees of greatness. The third chapter examines greatness and morality. Great men are due more respect than lesser men and they deserve more goods. This is because greater men are more valuable than lesser men. Virtue ethics involves certain character traits to make for goodness, but what about those traits which make for greatness? This chapter also examines the mechanisms which accounts for certain traits producing greatness in humans.

As the discussion proceeds, our understanding of greatness in men will have improved so that, in the final chapter, we can evaluate four viable theories of greatness. The first is that greatness is perfection; the second is that greatness in men is wholly a matter of moral goodness; for the third theory we look at how Robert Nozick's notion of reality relates to greatness by means of treating it

as theory of greatness. The final theory for greatness is one of my own devising called Transcendence of Type which, despite its mystical title, is not mystical at all.

2. *The Meaning of "The Great Man"*

Before we discuss *the great man* it is important to ensure that we have the same thing in mind for the discussion. The point of this chapter is to make the topic of the enquiry clear. The concept of greatness is the main focus here because it is a concept which we are all familiar with but which, I have found, is held only vaguely by most people. The other concept which forms part of the topic of this paper is that of humans; since by the phrase "The Great Man" I use the word *man* to refer to all human beings, not only to adult males. Women, children, surly teenagers, hermaphrodites and castrati of all ages are all included by the term. Before examining the great man, I begin by looking at greatness in general. That is, I discuss what can be discerned about greatness no matter whether it is greatness of an artwork or greatness of a sunset or greatness of a human being. Enough work has been done by other philosophers regarding what is essential to human beings, so I will only emphasis those aspects which make us human and that are pertinent to the topic of the great man.

In order to establish that we are all talking about the same thing when we discuss greatness I will proceed with an examination of our uncontroversial ideas about greatness. This chapter is in part an analysis of greatness for people, but it is not a complete analysis. This is not a shortcoming, since the rationale of having this chapter is *not* to dissect the concept and discover necessary and sufficient conditions for a man to be great. Although theoretical analysis has its place, I often find that it fails to do the job of completely clarifying and improving our understanding of a concept. For example, although bachelors are unmarried men, a person who understands only that about bachelors doesn't have a very rich understanding of them. Bachelors also tend to be more rascally than most people, they also wear layers of cologne, keep relatively empty fridges, are envied in

Brazil, pitied in Moldavia (I have experienced this first hand) and shunned in Oman. The classical analysis of "a bachelor" will not reveal to you these facts; just as a person who only knew that water was H_2O would not know that a glacier is made of water even if he was being slowly crushed to death by one. The point of this chapter is to bring the concept of greatness for people into clear view so that we can all say "Aha! *That*'s the greatness for people which we will be discussing," and then, in later chapters, I investigate such things as how greatness relates to admiration and what greatness consists of. This chapter lays the groundwork for those discussions so that we can proceed with minimal confusion.

First, I attempt to find out what is common amongst our various ideas of greatness by collecting examples of things which are great (such as God) and which are not great (such as flakes of scurf). These are the elements contained within the intersection of our ideas, so to speak. Then I discuss how claims of greatness need to be qualified, which is through noting the aspects of a thing which are great; in other words, in what respect they are great. Then we look at what kinds of things we speak of as the subjects of greatness in order to find out the kinds of things (such particulars, universals, events, etc.) which can be said to be great. There is value in considering how we speak of greatness, for our language both influences and is influenced by the structure of our concepts and so from one we can learn about the other. Although I leave the investigation of the theories of what makes men great for a later chapter, I briefly examine the structure of greatness. Then I discuss how greatness comes in degrees and how the magnitude of greatness is set. After speaking of greatness is general we can focus on greatness for people. After looking at the relevant aspects of humans for greatness, I try to clarify the concept of "the great man." Finally, because it is very common for people to conflate the concepts of greatness and goodness, I discuss the similarities and differences between these two concepts in order to avoid future confusion. Note that in this chapter I do not aim to evaluate the theory that the greatness of a man lies in his goodness, but instead to analytically compare the concepts of goodness and greatness.

2.1 Great Things

We can move towards an understanding of the term “great” by looking at synonyms and antonyms for the word. These synonyms—none of which are perfect—include “good”, “immense”, “exceptional”, “admirable”, “awesome” and “significant”. Antonyms of “great” include terms such as “mean”, “small”, “petty”, “trivial”, “wretched”, “spiteful”, “inconsequential”, “mediocre”, “fair” and “pitiful”. Having a list of synonyms and antonyms for a word helps us identify the concepts attached to the word; however, this can only go so far. For some words, the synonyms and antonyms are perfect: if you need to understand what the word “brinjal” means, being told that it is a synonym for “aubergine” tells you all you need to know provided that you already know what an aubergine is. If you wanted to know what “cowardly” means, discovering it is the antithesis of “courageous” will perfectly enlighten you to the meaning of the word. But most terms, including “greatness”, have neither perfect synonyms nor perfect antonyms and even if they do, it would be hazardously presumptuous to believe that the concepts to which these perfect synonyms or antonyms refer are so simple and common that we all share the concepts and have a clear understanding of them. Stating that a brinjal is the same as an aubergine fails to explain if no one shares a concept of an aubergine, and it is quite unenlightening if someone has either false beliefs surrounding aubergines or has only a hazy idea about those delectable fruits. In these cases, where we cannot assume shared ideas or perfect synonyms, it is more instructive to connect the concept to particulars.

If one were explaining what is meant by the term “plant” to a foreigner who did not understand the word, it would go a long way in the instruction were you to present him with an oak, a rosebush, a pumpkin and a jungle liana, then point at each of them in turn and say “plant”. It is likely he will grasp the meaning of the term to some degree. For sure, his understanding might end up being too narrow, if he connects the term “plant” to the idea of angiosperms, which are flowering plants. On the other hand, his idea might be too broad, for example he may take “plant” to mean

any living thing, including fish and beasts. But it is unlikely that whatever the foreigner's idea is, it will be so broad as to include all things within the botanical gardens including trowels, motorized carriages and cobbled paths, nor will it be so narrow and accidental as to be restricted to the set of those and only those particular oaks, rosebushes, pumpkins and lianas.

And so in the collection which follows, I hope that we come to improve our understanding with respect to what kinds of things the term "great" refers. In turn, this process should begin to shape and hone the idea we associate with the term so that the ideas we share between ourselves grow to resemble each other. Since some of the great things in the assemblage will be people, we should also approach a consensus on what greatness means for humans.

Amongst great things we find great works of fine art. Vincent van Gogh's *Sunflowers* is a great painting, as is da Vinci's *Mona Lisa.* Michelangelo's *David* is a great sculpture. These artworks are considered great by people who are experts in art. The authority of experts on art is the only credible one on this matter, since there are (as yet) no experts on greatness with whom we can consult. These artworks are certainly famous, as are their creators. Though it is quite conceivable that there is a great work of art, forgotten in an attic somewhere, which was created by a humble artist whom no living soul remembers, and who is also great. I submit this forgotten, though great, artwork into our collection. There are great artists as well as great art works. Art critics deem van Gogh, da Vinci and Michelangelo to be great artists. For certain, these artists are also persons, but one may disagree on whether they are great as people. Still, it is known that *as artists* they are great.

The catalogue of great people include: Alexander the Great, Nelson Mandela, Jesus, Mother Theresa and Julius Caesar. They may have been great leaders, statesmen or generals, and no one denies that they are fine examples of greatness in those domains. But it must be conceded that they are also great *as people*, or could reasonably be taken to be. For the benefit of our understanding of greatness, in particular of greatness for people, it is important that we distinguish in our minds the

difference between being a great man and being a great statesman. At this stage we might not clearly see clearly which elements constitute the difference, but there is some amount of conceptual distinctness between them, which should be obvious. Perhaps, as our investigation continues, we will discover that, so it happens in Caesar's case, his greatness as a person is completely borne by his greatness as a general; however, conceptually, greatness of a military general is different to greatness of a person and each consists of different things.

There are social entities and events that are great. Of social entities there are none I can think of which everyone will agree is great. I suspect that this disagreement is a symptom of the human tendency to believe that one's own faction is greater than all others. Partisanship is as much a hindrance to reason as it is to peace. Were I to mention any modern nation and put it forward as an example of a great nation, I predict that there would be dissent from many a reader out of loyalty to a rival nation or from some other sentiment. So I will cautiously submit an ancient entity as an example of a great social institution; let that submission be the Roman Empire. Of the events of mankind, The Great War is a great war, and I suspect it is far enough removed from the reader that even those who hold loyalties to the losing side will concede the greatness of that war. The Great Wall of China, is great both a wall and as a human endeavour.

Nor is greatness is restricted to the human domain. The Grand Canyon and Mount Everest are known as great geographical features. Certain non-human events, such as the big bang or the annual migration of the gnu across the Serengeti plains are also considered to be great. It may at first seem queer that such things can be great in the same way that people can be great. But, upon reflection, this queerness disappears. The queerness arises from the assumption that things which are great must be great in the same way, and that their greatness must be borne by the same kinds of things. But men and mountains are so dissimilar in kind that it hard to see *how* they can be great in the same way—and indeed they are not great in the same way. Those features which make a mountain great mostly differ from that which makes a man great.

There are great-making features that are shared by men and mountains, such as deadliness, renown and impact on the world. But, when it comes to mountains, altitude and bulk are the factors which carry the most weight in making it great. Mt. Everest is great because it is the tallest mountain above sea level in a fairly expansive locale, that locale being the planet earth. When it comes to men, height is not a factor in their greatness: the "Russian Giant," Machnov, towered an astounding 9 feet 4¼ inches above the ground and drew huge audiences in Victorian England, but for all this he is more a tragic figure than a great one. Thus both men and mountains can be great. Forthcoming, I discuss how we can compare the greatness of things of different kinds (Mussolini and Mt. Everest), as well as how we compare the greatness of kinds (e.g. men are greater than gnats). For the reader who remains unconvinced that a mountain can be great, I ask him to bear with me—the discussion will soon direct itself upon greatness of men and it will not matter whether mountains can be great. I am sure that we all agree that men can be, and that some have been, great.

I hope the reader has not found me to be a dictatorial tour guide through the specimens, but I do believe that by measured contemplation the reader will find for himself the distinction in concept of which I write.

2.1.1 God

Of all things, God, by definition, is the greatest of them all, so it would be grossly negligent to omit him from the catalogue. God is the greatest possible being and, happily for our purposes, also the greatest possible person. I am sure that the greatest possible human being is still not nearly so great a person as God is. Furthermore, God does not share his acme with anything else. Of course, when it comes to types, some things may exceed God in greatness for *that type,* provided that God is not of that type at all. For example, any great painting is a greater painting than God is, since God is not a painting at all.

Now it would be grand if we could put God up on a pedestal to observe him for the sake of our enquiry. But pedestals are for statues of men and we are interested in the greatness of men as men, not as statues. Still, humans are both persons and things. So it may still be useful to look at why God is the greatest person and the greatest thing.

According to Brecher's interpretation of Anselm (Brecher, 1974), when Anselm writes of God as the thing of which no greater can be conceived, he was speaking of God having an ontological greatness as distinct from being perfect. This greatness is Platonic in nature, so God is the greatest thing in the sense that he exists better than anything else. This kind of thinking is strange to the modern mind. To get a grasp of how things can exist in degrees, it may be helpful to think that a gnomon is more real than or exists better than the shadow which it casts. As a being, what God or anything does essentially is *be*, and being (in this archaic conception of it) can come in degrees.

Our normal concept of being or existing is as a physical substance which has size, volume, complexity in configuration, temporality and so on. Part of being a man is being a person and being a thing. Now on the thingness of man there is little to say, for man is just one thing amongst many and a rather mediocre thing at that. In size he is quite between atoms and galaxies, the chance that he came to be is not much more remarkable than the chance afforded bluebells and mammoths, and although he tends to last longer than mayflies do, his span is far exceeded by pebbles and comets. However, as things go, very few of them are, to our knowledge, persons. And of those persons who we know are real, all of them are human.

It may seem strange to put value just on being. Some takes on the ontological argument for the existence of God count being as a valuable feature which improves the way something is. This is absurd because *being* is not *a way of* existing—it *is* to exist. But here I am *not* allocating value to existence itself. I have mentioned several *dimensions* to existence, such as size, volume, temporality and so on which come in degrees and which may be great-making virtues for some things. It is the

degree to which something has those properties which does the work in making something great. A fictional mountain which is taller than Mount Everest is greater than Mount Everest, even though it does not exist. Of course, the fictional mountain does not have as much impact on the actual world as does Mt. Everest, but it may do so in the world of the fiction. (Were the aforementioned sentence not able to be true then we would have to abandon the method of thought experiments, which, whether good or bad, are a common tool for philosophers these days and it would be neglectful for me to leave them by the wayside.)

That which makes a person a great person contributes to making him or her a great human. I discuss this further in the section below entitled *Personhood and Humanity*. No human is as great a person as God is, but some humans are great humans for their greatness as persons. By seeing what makes the greatest person—who is God—as great as he is, we can get a feel for the kind of things which make other persons, such as humans, great. This is the advantage of having an exemplar such as God. As our investigation proceeds, I will show how, if a man were a great *person*, he would also be a very great *man*. For now, however, let us use the greatness of God—which is (by definition) unsurpassed—as a close ideal for the greatness of man. We could not use him as a paragon for the greatness of songs, countries or earthquakes because God is too unlike them (see the above discussion on taking a common genus for comparisons of greatness). As I have already mentioned, what makes a painting great is not what makes a god great. But God is enough like Man for us to compare them in order to discover what makes a man great. God's features are these: As a person, God is the greatest, (at least) because he is the most powerful and the most knowledgeable and the most moral. He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenelovent. Since doing stuff, knowing stuff and making decisions are largely what makes a person a person, it is easy to see why God is the greatest: no other person matches up to him. From this we can conclude that power, goodness and wisdom contribute towards greatness in a man. Further on, I discuss, in detail, how greatness of person counts towards the greatness of a human.

Although the topic of our inquiry is *The Great Man*, the catalogue we have now collected includes great things which are neither human nor which are great *as* humans. As the discussion progresses we will restrict ourselves to discourse over greatness of people and greatness for people. However, in order to understand a concept and all that relates to it, there are worse paths to take than beginning at the more general and making one's way to the more specific. When it comes to greatness, there is much which can be said about greatness in general which applies to the greatness confined to the domain of men. Due to the diversity of the specimens of greatness we have collected, we have at hand a rich source of samples from which we can pick out the clearest in order to facilitate our investigation into the various aspects of greatness.

2.2 The Not-Great

An improved apprehension of a concept can develop from knowing what things fall outside its scope. If we know what kinds of things are not counted amongst the great, we can know how to focus on those which are, and, with luck, figure out what greatness consists of. This process of ascertaining what does and does not fall within the scope of a concept is akin to sculpting out of clay, where the sculptor adds and removes clay in order to form a delineated figure of the image in his mind, a figure which he can show to everyone and thereby communicate the image in his head. In order to instruct a foreigner on the meaning of the word "big" we could tell him that it means "not small" and, supposing he understands the word "not" we could go on to explain the meaning of "small" by pointing to a collection containing field mice, booties, poppy seeds, Chihuahuas, bonsai trees and Pygmies.

A selection of those things which are not at all great include my finger painting done as a toddler which is not a great painting, the hillock down the road which is hardly a great geographical feature and my making of coffee this morning which was not a great deed. All of scurf, Wormtongue, knock-knock jokes and poetasters are not great. Aside from things which are not great—such as

those which are mediocre—there are things which are *distinctly* not great. If we imagine a scale of greatness, then as mediocrity stands to greatness, so these things stand to mediocrity. Ephialtes, (Herodotus 7.213.1-3) the Malian peasant who betrayed the Spartans at Thermopylae is distinctly not-great, and nor is Malvolio, the yellow-hosed butler from Shakespeare's *The Twelfth Night*. Perhaps most of the people with whom we are acquainted also fall within the order of the not-great, though their lack of greatness is not distinctive. For a moment you may wonder whether the clerk at the local post office is perhaps less great than Ephialtes, for Ephialtes played a significant part in history and is more widely known. But consider that Ephialtes' act was not an evil one, for there is no reason why he should have any more loyalty to the Spartans than the Persians. However, his act was certainly a wretched one and it is for his wretchedness that he is so well known and so widely reviled. Ephialtes interfered in the competition between two great armies and he did so for the promise of monetary reward. Then he fled persecution by the men he betrayed. When we ruminate over the life and deeds of Ephialtes it becomes clear that he is distinctly not-great.

2.3 Aspectuality

Greatness never comes unqualified. Whenever we say that something is great we must say in which way it is great, that is, which aspect of the thing is great. The same entity can be great from one perspective yet not great from another. For example, there can be little doubt that Albert Einstein is a great scientist. Unfortunately, he does not number amongst the great explorers. On the other hand, Roald Amundsen, who was the first man to traverse the Northwest Passage and, in 1911, the first man to reach the South Pole, contributed very little to our scientific knowledge. Amundsen is a great explorer but not a great scientist. There is a folk tale of a young Dutch boy called Peter who saved Amsterdam from flooding by plugging a whole in a dyke with his finger. Was little Peter great? This can only be answered is we specify great *as what*. As a stopper and bung he was great, as a citizen he was great, but as a pastry chef or as a soldier he was not great. When we

declare that something which happens to be man is great, we must still qualify whether we mean he is great *as a man*.

To be clear, by *aspect* I refer to the classes of object a thing falls under. I mean both "class" and "thing" quite broadly. By "thing" I want to include all things of which we can sensibly say that they are great, whether they are great or not. These possible (grammatical) subjects of greatness include events such as the Big Bang or the crossing of the Rubicon, people such as Margaret Thatcher and deeds such as the one when Edward Jenner inoculated little Jamie Phipps with the cowpox virus. Under "things", I exclude universals such as charitableness and redness. Although we can *say* that redness (or red) is great, we are not predicating greatness in the same way in which *The Old Man and the Sea* is great. Elsewhere I go into more detail on what we *do* mean when we make these predications. As to the classes, classes are those categories which a thing truly falls under. Darth Vader is a father, a human, an animal, a Sith master (briefly), a villain, a traitor, a nemesis, a fictional character and an historical figure in a galaxy far, far away. Were I to dangle Lord Vader from my balloon by his ankles, he would fall under another aspect, namely ballast. All of these things (including the ballast under the aforementioned circumstances) are Vader's *aspects*. And he may be great (or not-great) as any of those—we can say that Vader is a great villain or great as a father or whatever. Although I mean for an aspect to be a class, I do not mean it so broad as to include just any characteristic of a thing such as "born in 1959 A.D." or so narrow as to exclude any accidental feature such as "ballast", though I cannot say exactly how broad or narrow it should be. The extent of the definition follows the extent of how sensible it is to say that things are great. Since I am not using aspectuality to define greatness (yet), this is not circular.

2.3.1 "Great" unqualified

In everyday life we speak of things being great without qualifying in which way they are great. Normally, this causes no confusion and is not a problem. If, late in the dinner, I indicate

towards a crème brûlée and say that it is great, it is quite clear that I speak of its greatness as a dessert. When I speak of the Great War as being great it is obvious that I mean it is great either as a war as an historical event or both. Greatness becomes less clear when we fail to explicitly qualify it in the case of human beings. I take it that we agree that a person can be a great scientist yet not a great explorer, or great as a scientist but not great as a man. When I say than Vincent van Gogh was great, do I mean that he was a great artist or a great man? Unless the context makes it obvious, it will *not be* obvious to whomever hears my lofty declaration.

Generally we speak of greatness as applying to a thing's most striking aspect. By this I mean the aspect which most strikes us when we apprehend the given entity. If I point to it and ask "what is it?" you could answer "mammal" or you could answer "ungulate", "racehorse" or "Bucephalus". Of these four possibilities, a person with a normal human psyche would probably answer with one of the latter two alternatives. The first, "mammal" would probably be too broad a description, the last, "Sea Biscuit" would be two narrow since it is the name of a particular horse, whereas "racehorse" would be spot on. If we asked whether that thing were great, the answer would come as whether it were great *as a racehorse*. The reason why the human psyche would pick *that* out as a racehorse or as a gavagai or whatever is beyond the scope of this work, though it is clear that we all do have a preference for first seeing an entity according to some of its aspects rather than others.

Much confusion arises when we speak of certain men and women being great without specifying the aspect by which they are great. Pablo Picasso was undoubtedly a great artist, but when people speak of him as great they are often unclear as to whether they mean Picasso as a great *artist* or as a great *man*. In these cases it would do well to specify which. Difficulties arise especially when people attempt to compare greatness between things. Is Picasso greater than Sir Francis Drake? It is difficult to compare their greatnesses if we try to do so as either great artists or great adventurers, for one is a great artist but no adventurer and the other a great adventurer but

no artist. In order to compare them in this case we must be clear that we understand their greatness in term of their greatness *as men*.

2.3.2 Greatness Begetting Greatness

In my conversations with the public, I have found that they often claim that someone is a great man when they really only think he is great in some other aspect, in other words, they don't think he is great *as a man*. I take it upon myself point out this possible confusion by asking them to clarify what they mean, usually by asking "Do you mean he is a great *cricketer* or a great *man*?" The person, who I have now enlightened, would usually pause for a moment then reply, "I suppose I was just speaking about his greatness as a cricketer." But sometimes they are genuinely baffled by my question. Before I fully contemplated the matter of greatness I thought that this baffled unit of populace had a wit so dull it was concave. Later, upon reflection, I concluded that the unit's error was not so grave since greatness in one aspect can make for greatness in another. Greatness can beget greatness.

To say that Einstein is a great scientist or that Socrates is a great philosopher is not to preclude them from counting amongst great men, and it might even be that which accounts for them being great men. The ambiguity could be genuine, in that Einstein is *both* a great man *and* a great scientist. Furthermore, that which makes him great as a man is that he is so great as a scientist. The relationship between greatness in one area accounting for greatness in another area is *not* always a case of *simple*, *immediate* and *sufficient* constitution. For example, being a great general involves having leadership ability, impact, bravery and resolve. These things together are the components of greatness in a general which are also great-making for men. It is not simply the case that generalhood alone is a great-making virtue. And still, a man could be a great general yet have so many wretched qualities—that is, great-*breaking* qualities for the aspect of men—to such a degree

that he does not count as a great man, so greatness in one aspect does not guarantee greatness in another, even though it may typically contribute towards it.

Although greatness must be qualified and these qualifications draw distinctions as to how a thing is great, when we fail to explicitly draw such distinctions it is oftentimes due to a real ambiguity. So this confusion about *aspects of greatness,* which runs rampant through the populace, is a forgivable one because it is often the case that such-and-such a man is a great man *because* he is so great as a cricketer or as an artist or as a politician.

2.4 Subjects of Greatness

Three sorts of things can be predicated as great: things, kinds and properties. For any of these things we can (grammatically) say that they are great. These are not necessarily bearers of greatness, for language can lead us a astray. This is why it is important to reign language in and make it clear and precise. In the following I discuss what we mean when we predicate greatness of various kind of subjects.

2.4.1 Things

Napoleon was a great man and a great general. He led the French forces in a great battle, the Battle of Waterloo. Napoleon's leadership of his army was a great deed. We can say of things that they are great, whether these things be substances, such as Napoleon; events, such as the Battle of Waterloo; or deeds, such Napoleon's leadership. Even relationships can be great, such as the love between Romeo and Juliet, the rivalry between the houses of York and Lancaster or even the disparity of wealth between a sultan from the *Arabian Nights* and a Dickensian orphan. Of all these things, they are great relative to one of the kinds they fall under, for example, Napoleon is great *as a general* and Romeo and Juliet's relationship was great as a romance. Also, they are great

in virtue of the thing having some quality other than merely being of a certain kind, for example Napoleon's tenacity, creativity and victories are what makes him a great general.

2.4.2 Kinds

There are times when we think of kinds of things as being great, and we do compare the greatness of kinds. We would say that men are greater than gnats, and that generals are greater than milkmaids. In these cases we predicate that these kinds are great relative to other (actual) kinds of things, or that they are greater than some specific other kind. We may also say that kinds of things such as angels, gods, saints, supernova and humans are great, whereas things such as scurf, pebbles, window boxes and gnats are not great. When we speak of greatness like this we measure the greatness of these kinds by taking their genus as the aspect for greatness. Again, the genus which we take as the aspect may not always be clear, but will often be obvious from the context of the statement. To claim than humans are great is to say that humans are great *as animals*, possibly meaning that the average human is great as an animal. Gods and angels are great as persons, saints are great as humans, and supernovas are great as physical objects (for being voluminous, long-lived and for having a huge amount of energy).

For the most part, these comparisons are done by finding a common genus for these kinds, and then comparing the greatness of typical examples of each kind, taking the genus as the relevant aspect. For example, the most likely genus we would pick which is shared between men and gnats is the genus of animals. A typical man is a greater animal than the typical gnat, and so we say that men are greater than gnats. Or, if we are not making the comparison according to typical specimens, we can look at the kinds of feature of animal species which would make them great, such as personhood, survivability, impact, a rich evolutionary history, adaptability. Since *homo sapiens* fare better than *diptera* in these areas, the human species is greater than gnattish species.

The comparison is more ambiguous in the case of generals and milkmaids because the genus, and therefore *kind* of greatness, being compared is not easily deciphered. I expect the genus we would use for comparison is humanness, but it could quite plausibly be social significance. If we compare the typical general and the typical milkmaid, we need to know according to which aspect of the exemplars we are evaluating as great. Is the typical general a greater human than the typical milkmaid? Is he greater as a member of society? I think the answer to both questions happens to be yes, but there is still a conceptual difference between being great as a human and great as member of society. As features of the species, generals require certain traits which are ennobling for humans, such as impact, leadership ability, lethality, and so on which are not essential to milkmaidhood, which could also make generals greater humans than milkmaids.

2.5 Properties

Sometimes, we speak of a great-making property as itself being great, but we really mean nothing more than it is great-making; and even the then we must be qualify the property according to what type of thing in makes great. For example, we might say "kindness is great", but the best we can mean is that kindness is great-making, and still then only for some kinds of things, such as mothers, deeds and saints. At the least we mean that the property makes for greatness in an individual: if we say "Siddhārtha's kindness was great," what we mean (if we are rational) is that Siddhārtha is made great by his kindness.

Kindness, or any other characteristic, cannot itself be great. There certainly is a relationship between kindness and greatness, but it is not one of substantive predication. It is like the relationship between russet and cosiness. If I were to paint my parlour russet it would make it cosy, and when speaking casually, russet is a cosy colour. But russet itself cannot really be cosy, or at least we mean something different when we say that russet is cosy as to when we say the parlour or eiderdown is cosy. Things which are russet tend to be made cosy by their colour, and only in that

sense is russet cosy. Similarly, things which are kind can be made great by their kindness, and only in that sense is kindness great. The characteristic may make the thing it adheres to great, but the characteristic itself is not great.

Qualification is necessary for statements such as "kindness is great-making" because kindness (or some other characteristic) might be great-making for some things and not so for others. Kindness can make Fatimah a great mother, but it counts nothing towards making her a great accountant. Kindness might even be great-*breaking* in some cases—a tyrant or a torturer might be brought down to mediocrity *as a tyrant* or *as a torturer* through his kindness. (Note that great-breaking is not the same as wretch-making, though wretch-making does entail great-breaking). Since aspect makes a difference as to whether some quality is great-making, we should take care not to neglect to qualify an aspect for a claim that some quality is great(-making).

2.6 Being not Great

Some things have no greatness at all with respect to a certain kind of greatness. The finger painting which I made so lovingly as a gift for my dear mother when I was a toddler is not a great painting. I do not mean that it has minuscule greatness, but that it is not great at all. Similarly, pygmies are not tall humans. This is not to say that they have no height, just that they are not tall. Greatness is more like tallness than it is like height. All physical objects have a height, but that does not entail that that have a degree of tallness—even a small degree of tallness. Some of them are clearly not tall at all, though some are taller than others. Many things have some great-making qualities but in their cases those qualities do not succeed at effecting greatness.

If we take, for instance, a random sample of paintings or of men, we can confidently say of some of them that they are great or that they are mean. We might ruminate over several of them as to whether they are great, but there are definite cases of things which are or are not great. Even of

those which are great we can compare them and rank them according to which is more or less great than the others. So something either is great in some respect or it is not, and if it is great then it is great to some positive degree.

2.7 Degrees of Greatness

Greatness comes in degrees. Everything which is great falls somewhere along the scale of greatness. It seems no contradiction to say that Philip of Macedon was great and Alexander was also great but Alexander was greater than Philip. Besides not being a contradiction, most would agree that it is also true. Moreover, there are some great people who are greater than Alexander, and many people who are less great than Philip. At the highest end of the scale of great persons, we can put God. Whether or not he defines the scale—such that a person's greatness is measured only in comparison to the greatness of God—is a question which will be dealt with later.

Since our discussion is about greatness for men, it would be helpful if I could select some man with which we are all familiar and attest that he is a man of the highest calibre. However, I regrettably cannot find such a man. For each and every man of exceeding greatness which comes to mind I am able to imagine some or other improvement which would raise his position on the scale of greatness: had he only conquered Asia one more mile east! Had he only suffered incarceration one more year, his forgiveness would have made him even greater! Therefore, as it stands, those men who can stand proudly at the apex of greatness are but fictional constructs. Well then it behoves me to describe such a man. However, it is too early in the enquiry for this to be done with any confidence and integrity, since in order to construct the greatest possible man I must already be familiar with the parts that would constitute him, and, alas, this familiarity becomes feasible only *after* the analysis is complete.

Although we do not yet have a paragon of greatness *for men*, we have God as the supreme point upon the scale of great things and great persons. However, most things and persons do not feature at all on certain scales of greatness. This is not necessarily because they are of the wrong type—for even God has no home on the measure of greatness for artworks—but simply because they are not great at all.

2.8 Inside Greatness

So far we have looked at the surface greatness: what greatness covers, how it is aspectual and that it comes in degrees. At this point, a clear enough image of greatness should be forming in our minds for us to discern its internal workings and then pull them apart. Putting it back together again by using a theory of greatness in men will come in the last chapter. But for now let us look at what greatness is made of. These internal parts which make for greatness are pluralistic because for just one aspect of a thing, various qualities can make for its greatness; in other words, greatness might have a diverse range of bearers. It seems that all of courage, lineage, deeds, goodness, accomplishments and so on count towards a man being great. Beauty, renown, and so on count towards an artwork being great. Perhaps later we can find a way to unify all these great-making qualities with a theory, though for now it is enough for us to realise that greatness is not a simple, but is a compound, value.

2.8.1 Great-making Qualities

Nothing is simply great. There are things in this world which, conceptually, are simple. One example of such a thing is the colour yellow. When we think of the colour yellow it is not comp0sed of numerous ingredients. Of course I do not mean the whole palette of yellows, including lemon yellow, gamboges, canary yellow and citrine, which is a set of distinct colours that we describe as yellowish. By yellow I mean some particular yellow, say the primary colour yellow. This is not to say

that in the physical world there is no cause for yellowness in a real object, for there is: the molecules on the surface of a yellow object have valence electrons which, once excited then settled, release photons of a certain frequency. But conceptually, yellow is simple. Printers even analyse particular colours into CMYB values. But these analyses come after the experiences and after the concepts of the experiences. The quality of our experience when we see yellow is quite basic, as is the concept. On the other hand, the concept of cannibals is not simple. In order to have the idea of a cannibal we must at least have the ideas of eating and species. Cannibals have properties which make them what they are. We cannot see a thing as a cannibal unless we have prior concepts of eating and species. Moving along to more abstract concepts, circles are not conceptually simple because they are made of, by definition, a locus equidistant from a given point.

Greatness is not simple either. If a thing is great then it is great in virtue of its other properties. It would be happy to have a terse definition of greatness, to elegantly describe its locus, so to speak. But for now we must be content with the understanding that greatness is *somehow* comprised of other things, both in concept and in the reality of values. This can at least be seen to be true because greatness can manifest in so many ways. There is only one primary yellow, whether you see it in a rainbow, on an artist's pallet or on a daisy. But greatness comes in many forms. The greatness of a painting is unlike the greatness of a war, which is unlike the greatness of a man. Something must account for the difference. It cannot just be the kind of subject of the greatness, because two men can be great, as men, in different ways. For example, Alexander the Great and Buddha are both great people but they are great people in quite different ways. Since there are different ways of being great there must be something which accounts for the difference; and that something is how the greatness is comprised. Since greatness is comprised of various elements, it is not simple.

If we take anything which is great we will see that it is great in virtue of it having qualities other than greatness, on some level. A man can be made great by his character, accomplishments,

goodness, social relationships and so on. He might even be made great by his greatness as something other than a man, such as his greatness as a physicist. But then, on a deeper level, the physicist is made great by having qualities other than greatness. This is not to say that greatness is merely an accumulation of certain great-making virtues. These virtues *do* make up greatness but the relationship is more complex than just throwing them in a sack and weighing it for greatness. As to how much more complex, at this point we cannot say much more except that the bundle of goods is weighted with some standard of positive value and that it is discounted by those facts which count as great-breaking qualities.

There are a plethora of great-making virtues for men, which makes one wonder if they can ever by unified in a theory. Michel de Montaigne writes of three men who he considers to be the most excellent (Montaigne, 1957, Essays II.36). The first is Homer, who Montaigne sees as excellent for his creativity and for the widespread influence of his works. The next is Alexander, who is great because of his power, authority and the respect he commanded while he lived. More than this, Alexander is also admired for using his power justly. Montaigne maintains that the greatest man is Epaminondas, who is the greatest despite having little fame. This man is great for his gravity, principled actions, military successes, and for his ability to value things correctly—the most pleasure he had was from giving his parents contentment by winning the battle at Leuctra.

2.8.2 The Essence of Things and Their Virtues

Greatness is not a fundamental property. When something is great it is because certain features of the thing exist in a certain way. These features of the thing are those characteristics which are important for a thing of its type—though they do not need to be essential features. For example, beauty is not an essential feature of an oil painting, though we would say that beauty is an important feature of an oil painting. Some essential features are not considered to be important. For instance, it is essential in humans that their genes have a certain structure which marks them as

human, but we would not say that the human DNA structure *itself* is of value for a human, after all, so far as we know, large portions of the genetic code in humans is redundant, ineffective and arbitrary. The DNA structure partly produces a human's intelligence, athletic abilities and so on which are important, but these phenotypes are the important thing, not that which causes them. Had they come about in some other way they would be no less important—a different DNA structure might produce the same important qualities in the person (even if it makes them other than human). As a non-human based example, the having of 79 protons is essential to gold—it makes gold what it is. But that is not important to gold. What *is* important to gold—what gives it value—is its lustre, beauty and monetary worth.

The interested reader will demand an explanation as to what *important* means in this context. I confess that I have used the term obscurely, and the reader's intuitions may have balked at my examples. By *important* I mean *value-adding*. The question then arises as to what values are added which make a thing as great. Values can be categorised in several ways (and the following list is not meant to be exhaustive). There are aesthetic values such as harmony, symbolism and mimesis which can make something beautiful; there are moral values such as kindness, pleasurability and dignity which can make something morally good; there are epistemic values such as truth, consistency and luck which provide knowledge; and there are felicific values such as friendship, pleasure and success which make for happiness.

So which values are great-making? *Those values which are great-making are those which are important.* (1) Important values are ones which, in virtue of having them, makes a thing count for more. (2) Important values are ones which make a thing *matter*. Important values are not necessarily the ones which you are better off for having, but are (3) the ones which make you better i.e. more valuable. The three aforementioned definitions for *important values* all mean the same. The passing of a more valuable thing is more tragic, we are more obliged to preserve a more valuable thing, and things which matter more deserve more consideration in our decisions.

What is important for one thing is not always important for other things. It is important or value-adding that a horse is trainable, fast and healthy. Horses are also more valuable as horses if they have won a few races. What adds value to a poem is that it is beautiful and penned by a famous poet. Poems cannot be trainable, nor fast, nor healthy (though they can win contests). Important or valuable things for a man to have include independence, wealth, health, beauty, an interesting life, influence, moral goodness, fame, happiness and intelligence. A man's deeds, social relationships, reputation, station, *et cetera* are also important for him because they give him importance or make him more important.

Some men do not want any of these things, but we would say that having these things is somehow value-adding. To have them does not mean that the man is better off, in the sense that he is happier for having them, but he is greater. His is more valuable for having these goods than if he were without them. Something to note about these important things is their diversity. They include social relationships, moral qualities, historical factors, physical matters and character traits. Certain values, such as the beauty of a sculpture, only have physical characteristics count toward them. The history of a sculpture does not make it beautiful, but its form, size, colour and texture does. The trait of greatness is (usually) not like the trait of beauty for sculptures in that greatness can be made up of multiple kinds of contributing values.

The point drawing the distinction between essential and important qualities at this point in our enquiry is to avoid the mistake of equating greatness with high degree perfection, which is an easy mistake to make. In a later chapter we will return to evaluate perfectionism as a theory of greatness and examine the relationship between perfection and greatness.

2.8.3 Great-Breaking Qualities

A particular woman might be world famous, wealthy and astonishingly beautiful, which could be enough to make her great if she were not so very superficial, petty, mean-spirited,

uneducated, dependant, spoilt, undignified and vain. But because of her many great-breaking qualities and their magnitudes she is not great. Those features of her lessen her greatness, to the point at which her few virtues cannot compensate for them, despite their magnitude. This is hardly an unusual structure for a composite value. We make a similar judgement when we ask whether a person is good or polite: we look at reasons favouring their goodness or politeness and then weigh them against reasons which count towards them being evil or rude and thereby make our judgement. In order to be great, the candidate for greatness must either have an absence of certain great-breaking qualities, or have them to a low degree. A man might be the first man on mars, but if he is cowardly, breaks his word and concerns himself with petty things then these ignoble qualities preclude him amongst the ranks of the great despite his singular accomplishment.

These minuses often show up in arguments about greatness. I recall once having such a discussion some evening between wine and dinner, when my company and I quickened our mood for the night by wearing paper hats and discoursing on the greatness of various heroes from antiquity. The discussion came to Achilles, son of Peleus, whereupon our courteous discussion turned into a boisterous disagreement which ended in a duel by kitchen implements, a bleeding thumb and no resolution. The disagreement revolved around the question of whether or not Achilles was great. On the one hand he was brave, powerful, semi-divine, famous and vengeful. These qualities are undeniable and it would have been ridiculous for me to dispute them. On the other hand, I argued that he was childish, petty and too easily swayed by his passions. I mocked him for sobbing and wailing at the knee of his mother, Thetis. I joked that he could not keep faithful to Patroclus because he was tempted by Brisēis, a milkmaid's illegitimate daughter (which is not true—Brisēis has a reasonably good pedigree, but I am not above concocting fictions in order to drive a point). Then I suggested that Achilles maltreatment of Hector's body exceeded the evil warranted by a just vengeance because Hector was the better man. At this comment the ladles were brought out

from the kitchen. I had shown that Achilles fell short of greatness due to features which countervailed on his great-making virtues, and my opponent would not stand for it.

Despite a throng of great-making qualities, having great-break qualities do just that—they break greatness. Great-breaking qualities are more than an absence of great-making qualities, such as not having courage or not being beautiful. Great-breaking qualities include the *opposite* of great-making qualities, such as timidity or ugliness; but also include qualities for which there is no matching great-maker for that kind. For example, wheedling is a great-breaking quality which makes one wretched, whilst its opposite, candour, does not make one great.

2.8.4 The Magnitude of the Qualities for Greatness

It is not enough for a thing to have some great-making virtues and a deficiency of great-breaking qualities in order for it to be great. A thing needs to have its great-making qualities exceed some minimum degree. The finger painting I did as a child had a degree of beauty and impact on the world, but it did not have nearly enough beauty nor impact to make it a great work of art.

In most people we can find a quality which is admirable and which contributes towards greatness in a man. But these people are not necessarily great. They fail to appear on the scale of greatness for people despite having a great-making quality because they don't have enough of it. Therefore, to say that a person is not great is not to say that he is utterly mean, egregiously wretched or horrifically mediocre. However, it does not follow from him having some degree of a great-making quality that he is great.

Similarly, because a Pygmy is not tall does not entail that he has no height, because, of course, he does have some height. I take greatness as being somewhat like tallness in this respect. It is height which makes a man tall and even a Pygmy has height, but in his case the height does not

make him tall. A person or thing may have that quality which makes for greatness in some cases, but it does not make for greatness in that person's case because there is not enough of it.

If the example of the Pygmy's height does not resonate with the reader, then an analogy can be drawn between greatness and the quality of being a liar. All people who are liars have told lies. However, not everyone who has told a lie is a liar. In that instance of lying they were liars, and if the lie told was a white lie or a morally obligatory lie, then we may doubt that the person would even count as a liars at all in that instance. A flourishing career of lying is required to make liar of a person. They must have told enough lies of sufficient magnitude in order to rightfully claim the title of *liar*. Similarly, a few happy moments do not make for a happy life—a happy life is one which is generally happy.

2.8.5 The Touchstone of Greatness

A thing which is great is somehow *more.* I must confess that I am ignorant as to how this norm is determined. There are two alternatives which seem to me to be equally plausible in this case. Either the norm is determined by the ideal or by the real.

(1) Ideal Standards

In the former case the norm is set between the extremes of the most wretched *possible* example of a kind and the greatest *possible* example of a kind. For instance, there is some (though not necessarily only one) ugliest way in which a painting can be (in other words, an ugliest possible painting) and there is also a most beautiful possible painting. Assuming that beauty is a great-making quality of paintings as well as the *only* great-making quality of a painting, then any painting which surpasses the norm of beauty for paintings is a great painting.

An advantage of the ideal view of the norm is that it allows it to be the case that no *actual* instances of a kind are great. In a world where we only had the meagre artistic ability of Philistines or

final-year fine art students *and* in which beauty was the one and only criterion for greatness in paintings, then all paintings would fall beneath the ideal norm and so, in that world, no paintings would be great. Some paintings may be less ugly than others, but none would be beautiful.

A problem with the ideal view is that it can be too restrictive in that great things might be denied recognition for their greatness because no norm can be set. For example, by using an analogy with size, there is neither a conceptual upper value nor lower value on the volume of physical objects. Therefore there is no standard by which we can classify objects as medium-sized. (Actually, according to modern physics regarding our universe, this happens to be untrue, but if we view physical objects in a naïve, common-sense fashion this example will stand). Since there is no standard—no medium—it means nothing for an object to be large, provided that largeness is measured against an ideal. If largeness were the only great-making quality for physical objects then no physical object could be great. But we would like some possible physical objects to be great as physical objects; therefore we must reject an ideal standard for largeness. If this example does not quite resonate with the reader then he may find it more appealing to substitute beauty as the quality and paintings as the things, or intelligence as the quality and philosophers as the things.

(2) Real Standards

When the standard for greatness is set by how things really are then the problem of no-extremes goes away. However, when the norm is determined by the actual state of affairs such that some of the population must come close to fulfilling the norm, or, even better, exemplify the norm such as where there is an actual median for the population, then the bar might seem too low. In a world where operas, people and other things are all rather miserable by our standard but some are still less miserable than others, then some of the least miserable would count as great. Imagine an art class of five year olds. If the reader is a parent of a five year old, I must ask him to expel his little Rembrandt from this imaginary class for it will surely upset the experiment by clouding his judgement. The children produce their scrappy little finger paintings with poster paint, saliva and all

manner of other nasty quasi-fluids which accumulate on their tiny digits during the course of a class. Can any of their products (by which I mean their paintings) count as great artworks? I certainly doubt it—not if we take them in the context of all the artworks in the world. But at the annual kindergarten exhibition we can pick out one or two paintings and proclaim them as great artworks *in the context of the collection*. More generally, if the standard is real (in other words, based on actual states of affairs) we must qualify greatness by the population group which determines the standard.

When we do not explicitly restrict the collection to the Kindergarten Biennale, we generally mean that a thing is great given the set consisting of all of the relevant kind. So for great men we can say he was "great for his time," and we sometimes do. It is even common to say that someone was open-minded or liberal "for their time". In this sense, the norm for greatness can be variable—it varies according the chosen context. But generally when we say a man is great we mean that he is great amongst all men at all times, including those futuremen of whom we have no knowledge.

Henceforth we must choose either a norm which is both fixed and ideal, or one that is both variable and real. This choice is not a blanket one that need apply to all of the great-making qualities. For the some things the mark to exceed might be an ideal mean for some qualities, and a real one for others. The latter leads to less trouble than the former so where possible it would be more prudent to stick to real touchstones for greatness than ideal ones.

2.8.6 Greatness is Rare

When it comes to greatness, things which are great are great because they somehow stand above the norm for a species. Were there taller mountains in the Himalayas than Mount Everest then Everest would not be as great as it is. If many mountains on earth were taller than Everest then Everest would not be great at all. Whatever qualities of men make them great as individuals, they must have those qualities to an exceptional degree. Great men are not mediocre men, nor are they

inferior men. A great man stands above the multitudes in some respects. After all, we do not want greatness to be commonplace. Therefore greatness must be rare.

"But," the astute reader might say, "insistence on scarcity precludes a society of great men yet I can quite easily imagine a world of many men and every one of them is great." Such a thought experiment is quite compelling—but its persuasiveness is underhand. There is an illicit *seepage* from the actual world into this imaginary world, which we will call the world of Magnamund (apologies to Joe Dever). The people who are great in Magnamund are *not* being compared to each other, *nor* are they being compared to some objective and external standard of greatness, they are being compared to the imaginer's conception of the standard for greatness which he has developed from facts in this world—and the standard for greatness in our world is *lower* than the standard in the imaginary world.

In order to correct the scenario in the thought experiment so that my criticism of it can be made clear, let us imagine a plausible scenario in that world. One of these purportedly great men turns to another such man and says: "You are a great man, indeed." What can we make of this? Can we still compare the greatness of one man to another in Magnamund? Supposing that the men do not all to have the same level of greatness then we can. The speaker in the scenario above does not mean to say, "We all have, effectively, the same value, and you are one of us." The sense of such a statement is that the man spoken to is being admired for being a cut above the average citizen of Magnamund. Even if the speaker meant something more along the lines of, "You are greater than most of we great men," the speaker still insinuates rarity from using the syntax "—er than most".

In order to really understand this scenario, the conductor of the thought experiment must be able to properly immerse himself in the world where he can adopt a conception of standards of greatness for that world. This is a difficult thing for us to do in the case of Magnamund, even for the seasoned thought-experimenter. However, with resolve and patience I trust that the reader would

be able to. Now I ask the reader, with his ubiquitous vision in Magnamund, to pick out a great man. In that singular attempt by the experimenter—through merely selecting—he destroys a world. Magnamund exists on the truth of the claim that it contains only great men. But as soon as the experimenter ascribes greatness to *this* man or to *that man*, even if he picks him at random, he ascribes an inferior degree of greatness to the majority of the remaining men. And then, at the bottom of those, he makes them *not-great* and thereby unravels the foundation of Magnamund. I expect that in the reader's duplication of this experiment, so long as he endeavours to immerse himself in the world, he will also discover that in finding a great man he discovers a band of wretches.

But what if we favour an ideal standard for greatness which is independent of the actual populace of a kind? Provided that it is possible to attain or exceed this ideal benchmark then Magnamund would be possible and greatness might not necessarily be rare. But, according to my strongest intuitions, finding a great man in the country of great men destroys that country; and I would sooner reject the notion of an ideal for greatness than entertain the concept of some impossible world.

2.9 Cross-Type Comparisons

There are times when we would like to compare the greatness of two different kinds of things in order to see which is the greater. The difference between these kinds will be huge in some cases and small in others. These comparisons are more common in the cases where the difference between kinds is smaller, such as between a policeman and a fireman. In order to understand the comparisons when the differences in kind are small, let us begin by looking at the more difficult cases when the differences are large, because then the difficulties become clear.

An example of a huge difference between kinds is between an artwork and a war: Is the Last Supper greater than the Crimean War? Or between a monarch and a navy: was Queen Victoria greater than her Navy? These comparisons do not make much sense at first glance. For some kinds of things I would agree that there is no way in which they can be compared; however for most pairs of kinds, it is possible to compare them. There are two ways I can think of to tease some sense out of these comparisons. The first way is constitutively and the second way is exemplary.

2.9.1 The Constitutive Way

The constitutive way is by comparing the constitutive elements of the kinds which the kinds share and which are elements relevant for the greatness of those kinds. So, both monarchs and military forces have their greatness borne by their influence in the world. Therefore we must focus on how much greatness is produced for Queen Victoria by her influence in the world and how much greatness is produced for the British navy by its influence in the world and, thereby, we can find a common ground on which to compare the greatness of the monarch against the greatness of the navy. Now monarchs are also made great by their lineage, but the greatness of an armed force has nought to do with its genealogy, so we cannot compare the greatness between Queen Victoria and her navy based on their lineage.

We often do compare greatness between two different things in the manner mentioned above. When I asked my mistress's sister, who is a perfect angel of a girl, which she thought was greater: the Last Supper or the Crimean war, she answered "I would have to say the Last Supper, for I have not even heard of the Crimean War." No, I would not say that being widely known is a great making quality for both artworks and wars; but the point is that my mistress's sister made the comparison based on a quality (namely, renown) possessed by the two kinds which she took as a great-making quality that is shared by both of the kinds.

2.9.2 Why the Constitutive Way Fails

However, I do not believe that making the comparison of greatness based on the greatness of the shared constitutive parts of different kinds is the correct way to make these comparisons. The reason for this is that all the great-making qualities which account for making something great need to be taken into consideration. If we asked which is greater, the chess-playing computer Deep Blue or the person Mother Theresa there would not be much to compare them on. If we compared them as chess players, then Deep Blue is surely the greater chess-player, but our interest here is in comparing things of different kinds. If we tried to compare Deep Blue as a chess-playing computer with Mother Theresa as a nun, then have no basis to compare them, but when we compare them as chess-playing computer and person then there is a common element: cleverness, since cleverness is a great-making element shared by both humans and chess-playing computers. Now we obviously cannot compare their cleverness in the field of haggling for sutures and penicillin, for it would be absurd to expect Deep Blue to do that. We would have to compare their cleverness at playing chess, in which case, the computer Deep Blue is much cleverer than the human Mother Theresa. Deep Blue is therefore greater than Mother Theresa. But this is ridiculous. We all know that Mother Theresa is greater than Deep Blue because of those of her qualities which make her great and which are not shared with the chess-playing computer. Mother Theresa's kindness, determination, sexual self-constraint, influence and devotion make her great and, although they are not relevant qualities for chess-playing computers, they are precisely what make her greater than Deep Blue.

2.9.3 The Exemplary Way

The exemplary way of comparing the greatness of things of different kinds is to compare the greatness of things as each is great amongst its own kind. That is, to compare each as an exemplar of its own kind. According to the exemplary way of comparing greatness, the Last Supper is greater

than the Crimean War because the Last Supper is greater as artwork than the Crimean war is great as a war.

2.9.4 Why the Exemplary Way Fails

The exemplary way of comparing the greatness of things of different kinds fails utterly. It fails whether greatness is absolute or relative.

First, let us assume that greatness is absolute. In such a case we still make judgements about the greatness of things relative their kinds, but these judgements are always qualified according to the kinds. The exemplary way of comparing things does not work for straightness as it does not work for greatness.

Imagine a six foot long wooden branch with a little kink in it, such that the branch is about the shape of a normal javelin and the kink runs along the branch for 10cm and has an amplitude of 3cm.

Now imagine a six foot long wooden javelin with a little kink in it. The kink runs along the javelin for 10cm and has and amplitude of 3cm.

Now, as branches go the branch is quite straight, but as javelins go the javelin is quite wonky. So it is quite acceptable to judge the branch as straight and the javelin as crooked when taking them as branches and javelins. But the branch is certainly less straight than the javelin, when straightness is taken to be absolute. But, if we compare them according to the exemplary way, the javelin would be less straight than the branch, which is obviously false.

There are certain qualities for which the exemplary way can work. Take politeness, for instance. Whether a person's actions are polite is relative to the society in which they find themselves. Burping at the dinner table is complimentary in Japan yet offensive in Austria. We can

say, without qualification that a burper in Austria is a less polite person than a burper in Japan because burping in Austria is rude and Burping in Japan in polite. But greatness is just not one of those properties which can be compared like that. It is like straightness, in this respect, instead of like politeness.

A great school prefect may be great amongst other prefects, and a monarch may be mediocre amongst monarchs. The exemplary way of comparing their greatnesses entails that the school prefect is greater than the monarch, whereas it is evident to all that the monarch is really greater than the prefect.

If greatness is taken as relative, then it either becomes impossible to compare the greatness between things of different kinds or we must use the constitutive way of comparing. The constitutive way of comparing has already been shown to fail, as has the exemplary way when greatness is taken as absolute. Therefore, if the greatness between things of different kinds can be compared, it must be possible to do in the exemplary way when greatness is taken as relative. But this is impossible, therefore comparing the greatness of things of different kinds is impossible.

Why would it be impossible to compare the greatness of different things in the exemplary way if greatness is taken as relative? Because relativity demands that facts about greatness are qualified by aspect or kind, but we have no way of choosing which aspect to apply in a comparison between kinds.

2.10 Personhood and Humanity

The relationship between personhood and humanity is significant to this study for two reasons. First, once we establish that personhood is an integral part of humanity then we can look at issues surrounding greatness for persons in order to learn about greatness in the more specific case

of humans. This could not be taken seriously if we looked at, for example, the greatness of upright structures (which includes humans)—although humans are generally upright structures, verticality just isn't very relevant to the greatness of men. A second reason why it is important to stress the importance of personhood to humanness is that when we look at matters regarding the rights and duties with respect to the great man, a large portion of the rationale for them will come from the greatness of a man's person. In the following I argue that something about man's personhood is crucial in making him a great man. I use three arguments, each getting progressively weaker, but I present even the stronger ones because they are not perfectly covered by the weaker ones. The three arguments are, briefly: that personhood is integral to humanness; that personhood is important to humanness; and, finally, that personhood matters a lot and is maybe a necessary component of the greatness of a human.

I maintain that personhood is integral to humanness. By this I mean that all humans are persons. Of course, a torrent of counterexamples comes to mind in reaction to this claim. There is the case of the baby born without a brain, the comatose accident vegetable and the computer controlled manshell. We would casually call these humans, and popular philosophical intuition would agree. But when we consider the cases more closely, we will find that we do not *really* count these "humans" as persons. The reason we *call* them humans is that they are closer to human than anything else we have a category for. They are aberrant humans. Aberrant humans do not count as humans in the same way that a dribble glass does not count as a glass—glasses lose something important to being a glass when they change into dribble glasses. The glass loses the power to hold a beverage and be drunk from; it is also no longer *intended* to have a form with the aforementioned powers. A glass which is turned into a dribble glass by drilling tiny holes in it ceases to become a glass. Under scrutiny, we really do not regard aberrant humans as human. These aberrants have lost something so important to their humanness, namely personhood. Without personhood these aberrant humans are as human as a steak is a cow.

When we go off into the cosmos to explore other planets we might come across creatures which are close analogues to the ones we have here on earth. Imagine we come to the planet of Altair IV, which, aside from a few rocky islands, is covered by a sea of ammonia. In this sea we discover translucent creatures about the size of a human head. They are unable to propel themselves against the currents of ammonia; instead they are pulled this way and that, remaining buoyant due to a bladderlike float. These creatures have a radial symmetry and long stinging tentacles. We would surely call them jellyfish—but jellyfish they are not. The reason we call them jellyfish is that we have no current taxon for them and they are closely analogous to those things which we *do* call jellyfish. The important aspects which deny them membership to the class of jellyfish include their genetic code (if they have one), their biological and evolutionary history and their constitution, since they can survive in ammonia and are silicon based lifeforms instead of carbon based ones. Personless humans are *like* humans, just as Altairian "jellyfish" are *like* jellyfish in some ways. But the difference between these analogues discounts them from belonging to the same kind. Personless humans are *not* human, just as Altairian jellyfish are *not* jellyfish, dribble glasses are not glasses and steaks are not cows.

When we speak of humans, especially when discussing matters of morality, gender, politics and so on, we do not refer to humans purely as biological members of the species. In these cases we think of humans as social beings, moral agents, creators of value, souled entities and so on. From a zoological perspective—which is a very limited perspective— brainless babies are human—but that is not the perspective we commonly take. Indeed, botanically speaking, tomatoes are a fruit (more specifically, a berry), but from a culinary point of view they count as a vegetable. In most countries they also count as a vegetable from a legal point of view when it comes to import duties and tariffs. From the *normal* understanding of tomatoes, we count them as vegetables. The point of view from which we look at humans, in a common sense way, is *not* zoological. It is in a way which takes into consideration a human's social, moral and axiological aspects. These aspects are very much

dependant on the human being a person. This is why we do not think it is a *huge* error when a psychopathic axe-murderer is denounced as inhuman. Their lack of moral conscience and empathy makes them less of a person, which we count as making them less of a human.

I am aware that my view that personhood is necessary for humanness is philosophically unfashionable. I can, however, get by with the weaker claim that personhood is a very important, value-adding, part of being human. According to most philosophers, there are times when we have cases of humans which are not persons, such as when babies are born without brains or when ruffians, or even gentle folk, receive violent blows to the head that leave them in a vegetative state. The remaining meat is living human (according to popular intuitions), but it is not living person. There may also be persons who are not human, such as angels, androids and mole-people. I will not discuss further whether personhood is *essential* to humanness. I will just take it that personhood is a very important facet of humanness. Furthermore, it seems to me that there is a certain character to the personhood of humans which derives from our condition and which is unlike the personhood of angels, androids and mole-people. This character of personhood comes from the peculiar limitations, potentials, society and history of the human species. For example, there is an emphasis on individuality for humans, which is a less important virtue in androids. Temptations, personal freedom and overcoming obstacles are big issues for the personhood of humans, whereas it is not so for angels; and the notion of a person being a member of a community of persons has a different flavour for the Borg than it does for humans.

Another reason to think that personhood is important for humanness, at least when we are interested in the great man, is that I have not discovered, nor can I even imagine, a case of human non-person who is great. There might be some accounts of greatness which could allow for this. Those other account include the theory that greatness comes from a connection to the divine, that greatness is a matter of lineage, that greatness is merely renown and that greatness is a matter of impact in the world (thought it would take a wild thought experiment to show how the

man-vegetable has great-making impact). When we think of great men, it is usually those features of them which are (logically) dependant on their personhood which accounts for their greatness. These are features such as their deeds and accomplishments, their personality and their moral status. They are men who have lead armies or made important discoveries, are exceptionally brave, or are exceptionally righteous. None of these features can obtain in non-persons or non-agents. Therefore the features which belong to the human flavour of personhood do important work in making a man valuable and for making him great.

Perhaps it is from a paucity of imagination that I cannot even conjure up the image a great man who is not also a person. The closest I can come is the computer controlled manshell. The manshell is a human body which is remotely controlled by a sophisticated AI computer through a complex of sensors and stimulators connected to the manshell's nervous system. Perhaps it crept inside the chap's ear one night, or when he turned eighteen the AI started manipulating his neurons with focused tractor beams sent from the planet Yuggoth. The manshell is, in effect, a marionette made of meat. Provided that AIs are not persons, the strings are not even controlled by a person. The manshell is, I suppose, a non-person human animal. If the reader balks at counting the manshell as a human then she must concede my previous point about personhood being essential to humanness. Now imagine that Napoleon were really a manshell. Presuming that the AI is not a person and cannot have mental states, Napoleon is not a person either. The Napoleonic manshell is neither courageous nor cunning because he has no fear, no sense of self and no understanding. We cannot say that he lead the French army because leading an army is an *action*. Actions require beliefs and possibly desires too and the manshell has neither. The Napoleonic manshell leads an army in the same way that an eclipse scares the peasants or a banner fluttering in the wind inspires the troops—neither the eclipse nor the peasants really *act*; but their behaviour is described through an anthropic metaphor. Without actions, accomplishments become impossible, so we cannot count the Napoleonic manshell as great based on his accomplishments because he accomplished nothing.

Strangely, it is still rational to claim that the Napoleonic manshell became emperor of France. This warrants some sniggering by those who are not French and some embarrassment from those who are, for the French might as well have had a toaster as a leader. (Though toasters and other household appliances, whether gifted with speech or not, can still make better leaders of state than certain real-world human leaders.) It does seem that social status can contribute to a thing's greatness, though it works differently for men than it does for manshells. Social status counts for greatness in men because it is usually an accomplishment to attain such a status, thought of course these statuses can also be hereditary. Social status also empowers a man, but this means little if the power cannot be exerted in *action*. Consider the bizarre case (please permit me to pump your intuition here) of a human vegetable who has been given the status of regent by a relevant society, or has even awarded an honorary doctorate. The status of regent or doctor does not make the man in the gurney with the tubes going in and out a great man, nor does it even contribute towards greatness. So the title of emperor does not make the Napoleonic manshell great either. The Napoleonic manshell has not accomplished anything, he has no great-making character virtues (since he has no character), and some of those traits which he does have, such as health and fame, which might make for greatness in a man count for nothing in a manshell. So the human non-person manshell is not a great man nor can he be unless, by some sorcery, he attains personhood.

That which I am trying to impress upon the reader is that the way a thing is as a person matters a lot as to whether and as to how they are great as a human.

2.11 Greatness and Goodness

The concept of greatness is often conflated with the concept of goodness, especially when it comes to describing men. The conflation is a forgivable one since there are many related points between the concepts and also because, in speech, "good" and "great" are commonly close synonyms, although "great" is somewhat superlative. So it is useful preparation to disambiguate

these concepts before we delve further into our investigation. This disambiguation is not a criticism of the theory that goodness and greatness are substantively the same (for humans, at least)—it is an attempt to elucidate the concept of greatness by comparing and contrasting it with the concept of goodness. At some points, however, I creep into the realm of examining the theory that greatness is goodness. This is because theories and conceptions often inform each other. If I were doing science I would rightly guard against this bidirectional correspondence, but, since this paper is philosophical, I will make room for it.

2.11.1 Ambiguity of Good

The term *good* is a rather vague one. When we say that a thing is good we could mean any number of things. When I say that Sherlock Holmes is good I could mean that he is a morally good person. I could also mean that he is a good detective. Grammatically, I could mean that Sherlock Holmes is what good consists of, but that would be quite a stretch of common sense to take the statement in that way. I once gave up on explaining to a monotheist that "God is love" cannot mean that *God* and *love* are one and the same and that it really means that God is motivated by love in all his actions, so these stretches of common sense are not all that uncommon. The point is that when we predicate good of something, it must be qualified. When we speak normally, we don't need to make the qualification explicit. If someone asks for an investigator and I say "Sherlock Holmes is good," it is obvious in which way I mean "good"—which is that he is an excellent investigator. The meaning of "good" is likewise obvious if St. Peter mentions that he is sending Sherlock to hell and I protest, "Peter, you cannot! Sherlock Holmes is *good*!".

Rather like "good", "great" is also ambiguous. The sentence "Sherlock Holmes is great" has diverse possible meanings. It has even more possible meanings than does "Sherlock Holmes is good". The greatness could be predicated on Sherlock Holmes's righteousness, detective ability, potential for great deeds, influence, or on his life.

I think that the basis for this ambiguity is that both terms require qualification which they often do not receive. Interestingly, when we see which aspects of a thing are possible foci of good and great, there are many overlaps. Something can be good or great with respect to its moral, aesthetic, and practical aspects, at least. For instance, a kind deed can be good or great for its kindness (moral aspect), a song can be good or great for its beauty (aesthetic aspect), and sword can be good or great for its cutting ability (practical aspect).

2.11.2 Great as Superlative

As we use our language it seems quite acceptable to say, "A great man is better than a good man who, in turn, is better than a bad man". However, our language is a thicket of ambiguity which, for the philosopher who wants precision and clarity, needs to be untangled. Indeed, "great" is ostensibly a superlative of "good"—at least when we see the term used as it has been in the given sentence. But when we look more closely we will notice that it is not simply the case that "great" trumps "good" which bests "bad", and yet it is also not simply the case that the good and the great are completely unrelated.

As I discussed in the section on the degrees and magnitude of greatness, greatness does indicate a high degree of some quality, so it is unsurprising that we sometimes use the word "great" as an emphatic form of the word "good". Generally, when we speak of "great" we do not use it merely as a superlative for "good". We often mean something more. For example, we might call Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* a great novel because of its scope and popularity. Some people even find it enjoyable; however, I would not call it a good novel. The plot is dull. The characters are flat. Tolkien spends three pages describing the history of a hillside in some parts, then writes marvellous redundancies such as "the shadows were black" or "after the sun rose, time passed and then it sank again over the hill of Glanmorwynorwyn: indeed, it took a whole day for the Event of Lymsintrinannor to occur." The quality of goodness which a speaker refers to is an aesthetic one,

having to do with the artform of the novel. The quality of greatness may include the aesthetic qualities of the book, but it also includes much more. The novel is neither good nor very good, but it just might be *great* despite its aesthetic flaws.

Furthermore, there is no contradiction to say "Voldemort was great man. Not a good one, mind you..." or "great things have happened in my life, though very few of them were good." These statements do more than merely emphasise the superlativeness of "great" in comparison with "good", as one might do when saying, "this ice-cream isn't good...it's great!" or "he's not a *good* flautist, he's the *best*!". In the former sentences the utterer indicates that something qualitative differentiates greatness and goodness. This qualitative thing is certainly a difference in value: the "goodness" refers to a moral value, a gastronomic one, or to artistic virtues, respectively; and the "greatness" refers to something more expansive. In the penultimate chapter I delve deeper into ways in which goodness and greatness can come apart.

2.11.3 Good Man, Great Man

An ambiguity of qualification arises in sentences of that have the grammatical form found in "he is good" and "he is great". In these cases we are saying "that thing, which is a man, is good" or "that thing, which is a man, is great". But it is not explicit as to whether the man is morally good or good as a detective or great as a detective and so on. However, if we say "he is a good man" or "he is a great man", we do not need to explicitly qualify the goodness or the greatness. In these cases we speak of the man *as* a good man or *as* a great man.

When we *do* speak of a good man or of a good person most native speakers of the English language understand that we mean to evaluate the person's moral qualities. Were Sherlock Holmes a womanizing, puppy-kicking bastard alongside being a astute clue-finding crime-solving detective

we might still call him a good detective, but we would not count him as a good man. No matter that Mother Theresa is an incompetent gymnast—her moral goodness makes her a good person.

2.11.4 Goodness makes Greatness

Although this is properly a discussion for the later chapter on the theories of greatness, people so often conflate the quality of goodness with that of greatness that it is better I draw the distinction clearly as soon as possible. The position I maintain is that what makes a man a good man and what makes him a great man are not *always* identical; though I do not exclude the possibility that's man's greatness is entirely borne by his moral goodness. I wish I could give a real-world example of such a man that could satisfy the reader, but I cannot. The reason for this is that I would need an instance of a real person who has nothing going for him other than his goodness. (I once knew a fellow named Sol who never fastened more than a single button on his shirts and who claimed that there were only two things that were all and only good, namely chocolate milk and Obi-Wan Kenobi.) Such a pure example would necessarily lack fame, which is a property some people might claim is great-making, and is one which I examine in a later chapter. Were the person not famous then it is doubtful that both the reader and I would know of this good and great person.

So I ask the reader to either find or construct his own example, and I do not think the latter will be difficult, for the clay in the laboratory of our minds is both abundant and malleable.

The following is a blueprint to fashion an imaginary man who is so good that he is great. Please take care not to make him maximally morally good because we will use an example of the moral saint later on.

Begin with a man who is exceptionally good and whose goodness does not seem peculiar. Then make him peculiar by removing all which typically comes with goodness but which we think could account for greatness. This man always keeps his promises. He is both kind and

compassionate. Perhaps he owns a fortune of wealth and puts it much into projects to help others while he himself lives very modestly. If a man is made righteous through the hardships of doing right, then let us make it hard on him: give him strong natural inclinations toward lust, greed and cruelty—and then have him overcome them. We do not need to go overboard here—he does not need to take any huge deficiencies in his life to make him as good as he can possibly be, he just needs to be really really good. If he takes too many deficiencies in various areas of his life those deficits will make him too remarkable. All we need is a believable blandness combined with goodness. Add some aesthetic appreciation and sporting activities and friends to this man if you must do so to prevent him from becoming a weirdo, even if you need to subtract a little greatness in order to do so. Perhaps give him a job as a baker or a scribe. Finally, there shouldn't be much more to this fellow than him being very good and having that which is necessary for him to be good.

This man who is as good as one can reasonably be is surely great as well. He is both admirable and worthy of respect. He is a man whom we value and whom ought to be valued. So goodness makes for greatness. Now, can we add anything to him which would make him greater yet no more (and possibly less) good? If we can, then goodness is not all there is to greatness. Let us make him physically attractive, a better sportsman, give him a passion for fine art, a noble lineage and a genius at mathematics. I doubt any of these things make him a morally better person, yet they do make him a slightly greater one.

But even if we find a common conjunction between good and greatness, or even between evil and greatness, this is not to say that either good or evil *is* greatness. Some may say that the great man is the good man: that a man is as great as he is good. Although a morally good man may be great, so too may an evil one be great. Alexander slaughtered thousands, Hitler's world view was a terrible one, and God punishes generations of men for the sins of their forefathers. None of these persons are good, yet all of them are great. But do not think that the goodness or wickedness of a man is so completely divorced from his greatness: Hitler would not have been so great had he not

had such a cruel opinion of the world and then strove to realise it; had Amitabha Buddha been less compassionate he would have been less great. What makes these men great is that they chose their principles and then they lived up to them—and the principles they chose were significant ones. Hitler and God sought worlds where they are slavishly obeyed and certain peoples are arbitrarily favoured—and this is evil, and the evil bore their greatness. The Buddha announced: "I am good," and he successfully lived the goodness he chose. This is why he is great in virtue of his goodness.

2.11.5 Goodness Resembles Greatness

I have shown that goodness and greatness do substantially diverge in some cases, nevertheless these two concepts share several features, which explains why speakers of English often use the words interchangeably. Sometimes they do so without any confusion or conflation of their concepts because *"*good*"* is such an equivocal term that it *can* mean "great*"*; but frequently there is a rationally unsound mix up of these ideas that can be discovered through philosophical inquiry, which is sometimes known as *nitpicking* both on the streets and in polite company.

Goodness, often of a moral sort, might be the (partial) source of greatness. We see goodness fulfilling such a role in saints and revolutionaries. Non-agents, such as certain vaccines and legal declarations, might be instrumentally good or beneficial, and they can also be great because some of what makes for greatness in vaccines and laws is that they bring about good in the world.

Goodness and greatness are both values. They are properties which arise from facts and which have a moral import. When we judge something to be great we make an evaluative judgement based on other facts. It is of no concern whether or not the reader thinks that the fact/value distinction is real, since I am sure she acknowledges a conceptual difference between the two, even if it becomes vague on some matters. I discuss the details of the moral import of greatness in the chapter after next.

Goodness, like greatness, also admits of degrees; furthermore, both the absence of good is possible as well as its opposite. There is a “good”, a “better” and a “best”, something can be bad and something can be neither good nor bad. For greatness, some things may be greater than others, some things may be mediocre and other things may be outright wretched, despicable or insignificant.

Goodness and greatness are both aspectual, depending on the type of goodness. The aspectual nature of goodness is particularly obvious when “good” is meant as arête or in a pragmatic way—in those cases one must always qualify the term, and can ask “good *as* what kind of object” or “good *for* what benefit”.

In such ways do the ideas of goodness and greatness possess a common structure.

2.12 Conclusion

Hopefully we have come to a more common understanding of what is meant by “The Great Man.” Now when we discuss greatness we will understand that it ought to be qualified according to some aspect of the thing which is great, that it is comprised of diverse elements which make for greatness if they come in the proper degrees; that when one says a property is great, that means that it is a great-making virtue, either in generally for some type (the type is a qualifying aspect); that some individuals can be greater than others in some way, which is *as an x* or *as a y*, but the greatness *kinds* can also be compared.

The reader should now also have a clearer idea of how these comparisons are done. Now, we should also apprehend the similarities and differences between goodness and greatness which will allow us to distinguish these concepts, at least to improve our understanding of greatness. The importance of personhood to the greatness of individual men as well as for mankind has also come

to the fore. We are finally ready to embark on more focused explorations into issues surrounding greatness until, finally, we can investigate what greatness in men *is*.

3. *Greatness and Admiration*

There is little doubt that some connection exists between greatness and admiration. When greatness is spoken of, the conversation will occasionally mention admiration. Oftentimes, *admirable* is even used as a synonym for *great*. But what, exactly, is this connection? To begin, we should examine what it is to admire and how we use the term. Such a discussion may shine some new light on the idea of admiration, but its primary aim is to ensure that we are on the same page when we discuss admiration. After the structural similarities between admiration and greatness are brought forward, the tie between these concepts will demonstrate itself as uncannily close—an uncanniness which cries out for an explanation. Once that is out of the way we can delve into exact nature of the link between greatness and admiration.

As I proceed, I shall consider then I shall reject the view that greatness simply consists in being admired. I shall then go on to develop a more complicated view in which greatness is essentially that which one ought to admire. Although I shall reject this view, it will lead us to the position that we ought to admire that which is great and that whatever is great ought to be admired. Although it is true for rational and epistemic oughts, the ought with the most explanatory force in this case, and the most interesting one, is an ought of propriety or appropriateness. The value of *propriety* accounts for a fairly common kind of ought which is also one which often goes unconsidered. As we consider the topic, I hope that we will come to agree that whatever is great ought to be admired and that which warrants admiration is great.

3.1 The Meaning of "Admiration"

I do not intend to use the term "admiration" in any peculiar nor esoteric fashion. By admiration I mean what we normally mean by the word when we use it in conversation. Of course, as a philosopher, I will take it upon myself to tell us what we *really* mean by the term when we use it normally. We speak of admiring beautiful things, admiring deeds and admiring people. Common synonyms for "admiration" or "to admire" are "to esteem" or "look up to" (usually directed at people) or "to appreciate" (often in the case of beauty) and "to respect". These synonyms are not perfect, and I will show the points of distinction which obtain between them and "admiration", but their mention should bring us closer to a shared understanding of the topic at hand.

3.1.1 Admiration as Looking Up To

A common, though imperfect, synonym for *admiring* something is to *look up to* it. This phrase usually applies to people. It would, of course, be quite odd to speak about looking up to a piece of music or mountain, even though both of these sorts of things are possible objects for admiration. The phrase *looking up to* is a metaphorical idiom which suggests a difference in magnitude between the looker and the looked-at, where the looked-at is *loftier* than the looker. This metaphor points at an important element to greatness, which is that greatness suggests a higher order of magnitude from some norm. When we admire we acknowledge a certain magnitude of a quality in what we admire because when we admire we judge something to be great, and greatness implies said magnitude.

Looking up to is subjective because part of its meaning in a particular case has to do with the condition of the subject, who is the admirer. The condition of the subject or looker is that he is baser than the object or the looked-at. This subjectivity (of the looking up to) does not match up to the meaning of *to admire* because admiration carries no such comparison with the admirer. A person

cannot look-up to someone whom he thinks is meaner than himself. Aside from the (im)possibility of the action, it would be *improper* for a person to look-up to someone who is meaner than himself. A man can, however, *admire* another person whom he believes is less than himself. Furthermore, it is not always *improper* for a person to admire someone else who *is* less than himself but who is great in his own right; just as God can admire a person who is (and must necessarily be) less great than God himself.

3.1.2 Admiration as Appreciation

The approval which comes with admiration explains why the word *admiration* is often used to describe aesthetic appreciation, in which case the thing approved of is an aesthetic value. The great dandy and aesthete, Oscar Wilde, concerned himself with the nature of beauty and admiration. The following is an instructive work of his on this topic, which, to be honest, I have included with more of a mind to delight the reader than to enlighten him:

> When Narcissus died the pool of his pleasure changed from a cup of sweet waters into a cup of salt tears, and the Oreads came weeping through the woodland that they might sing to the pool and give it comfort.
>
> And when they saw that the pool had changed from a cup of sweet waters into a cup of salt tears, they loosened the green tresses of their hair and cried to the pool and said, "We do not wonder that you should mourn in this manner for Narcissus, so beautiful was he."
>
> "But was Narcissus beautiful?" said the pool.

> "Who should know that better than you?" asked the Oreads. "Us he did ever pass by, but you he sought for, and would lie on your banks and look down at you, and in the mirror of your waters he would mirror his own beauty."
>
> And the pool answered, "But I loved Narcissus because, as he lay on my banks and looked down at me, in the mirrors of his eyes I saw my own beauty mirrored."
>
> (Wilde, 1948, p. 844)

The term "admiration" is frequently used to indicate an *appreciation* of value or an *estimation* of value. The value is usually an aesthetic one. We speak of admiring a painting, of admiring a panorama, of admiring the colour of your lover's eyes or of admiring one's own eyes in the image reflected off a pool of sweet waters. In these cases we are clearly referring to an aesthetic admiration where the beauty of something is being admired. This is not the same as the aesthetic attitude, which is said to be a distinct attitude whereby the aesthetic properties (exclusively) of an object can be discerned and contemplated. In admiring the beauty of something, the thing's aesthetic qualities have already been apprehended. During admiration of this sort, the beauty is evaluated as great (in other words, as a great-making property) and thereafter the object is admired for its great beauty.

Note that the beautiful thing is the object of admiration, not the beauty itself; Narcissus admired *himself* because of his comeliness, he did not admire the comeliness itself. Wilde's writing of seeing beauty itself can only be meant figuratively unless we are brave enough to hazard reification. If the brave reader disagrees with the object of admiration which I have suggested, namely that the object is the possessor of beauty rather than the beauty itself, then I suspect that the reader is a long-time philosopher whose intuitions have been warped through extensive philosophising. I assure him that I have done a survey of the intuitions of several common thinkers

over an afternoon tea (and no stronger beverage), and they unanimously agreed with the position I present here.

In these cases of admiration, which I will call appreciation or aesthetic admiration, we mean that a person is focusing his attention on an object before him, estimating its value, finding it to be noteworthy, and enjoying his engagement with the beauty (or other value) in the object.

We must be careful when speaking of admiration in this way. In some cases we a think of admiration as having a real interaction with greatness, but sometimes we think of it as enjoying an aesthetic experience. For instance, I can "admire" Gustav Klimpt's painting *The Kiss* in both these ways, that is, there are two distinct happenings of which both are termed admiration. In the case of admiration having to do with greatness, I can contemplate *The Kiss* as a painting and think of how marvellous it is with respect to its great-making qualities such as its renown, beauty, origins and so on. When I admire *The Kiss* in the sense of aesthetic appreciation, it is not enough for me to merely contemplate the painting, I must be present before an image of the painting or before the painting itself. Then I must necessarily experience some kind of enjoyment regarding the painting's beautiful features. In such a way do I aesthetically admire the painting. (Perhaps this appreciation is also possible if one is not present before the object but can conjure up in one's imagination a vivid experience of being in its presence.) This aesthetic admiration or appreciation does not only apply to artworks and other beautiful things such as sunsets and orchids. We can also have an attitude of appreciation towards things which do not make for beauty in the normal sense, such as the sublime immensity of a building, the brutality of a carnage, the orderliness of a march, the efficiency of an engine, or the power of a statesman.

I must confess that the difference between greatness-admiration and aesthetic-admiration is not one which is clear to me. When I first began to contemplate greatness there was a time when I thought that greatness was a kind of aesthetic value. I later rejected this theory, which roughly

stated that a thing is great if and only if a description of it, when seen as a literary text, would count as beautiful (it could be romantic, tragic, dark, satirical, polemic and so on). There are obvious problems with this account, which I will not explore because I have put in firmly behind me. But the connection between greatness-admiration and aesthetic-admiration or appreciation has made an impression on me. There are several alternatives for the connection which I find viable, and I cannot, as yet, choose between them. These alternatives are: First, that aesthetic-admiration is a subset of greatness-admiration where the great-making quality is entirely or predominantly beauty; this option allows for admiration to be about greatness generally, and about beauty in specific cases. The second option is that aesthetic-admiration and greatness-admiration are conceptually distinct and quite different, although they may happen to have similarities. According to option two, "admiration" (unqualified) is a perfectly equivocal homonym. The third option is that admiration is not exclusive to greatness; admiration comes in several kinds; one of these kinds is an admiration with respect to the greatness of an object and another kind is admiration with respect to the beauty of an object.

The points of similarity between admiration and appreciation are that they both involve seeing positive value in their objects, and that it is possible for the value to be beauty for both attitudes. Of course, in the case of aesthetic-appreciation the value is also *necessarily* beauty. The points of difference between admiration and appreciation are that for appreciation the subject must experience the object whereas for admiration the subject can merely contemplate the object; appreciation is founded on those characteristics of the object which the subject finds beautiful or which contribute to the beauty of the object, whereas with respect to admiration, beauty is not always that in virtue of which the object is admired. Furthermore, appreciation is typically accompanied by a certain *feeling* of *upliftment* whereas for admiration this feeling can be absent. If any feeling typically accompanies admiration, it might be unique to it and (from my own introspection) may be somehow experientially akin to one of dread, awe and confusion.

Unfortunately, none of these similarities, nor any of these differences are usable to discriminate between the three viable alternatives which explain the connection between admiration and appreciation. So, for now, the alternative connections are equally strong and none have the upper hand.

3.1.3 Admiration and Envy

Admiration is closely related to envy, though it is distinct from envy. Although the attitudes of admiration and envy are not easy to confuse, even for the unschooled, it is enlightening on the topic of admiration and greatness to look at the differences between admiration and envy because of the issues which it raises. The envy I write of here is not the envy where a person is resented and hated for having certain goods. I would more properly call this attitude *invidia.* The envy which I will focus on is the envy which arises when we see something a person has, which we *don't* have and which we want for ourselves. There is a kind of gall here, but it is directed towards the universe rather than the current possessor of the goods. Envy is also accompanied by a certain feeling, which is an uncomfortable sensation located somewhere in a person's gut. However, I am interested in these things as attitudes rather than as emotions. Instances of both admiration and envy partake of the judgement that there is something of value. When we envy someone we think that they have something of value, which is worth having and which we want to have.

It is possible to both admire and envy a person for the same thing, such as her work ethic, her courage, her fame and so on. Sometimes the object of envy or admiration is not the person herself, but her *having* something of perceived value. We can loosely speak of the object of envy as *the thing* (not the *having-of)* which the person has and which we want for ourselves, but this kind of speak is inaccurate, because if these things were the object of envy then envy would be indistinguishable from strong desire for the thing. However, this mistaken *transference* to the desideratum in our use of the term "envy" is commonly paralleled for the terms "greatness" and

"admiration". As I have already discussed, we often call great-making qualities great when all we mean is that they are great-making for members of a certain kind, or that they happen to make a significant contribution to greatness in some particular case. With admiration, we speak of admiring some characteristic of a thing, such as its courage or that it climbed Kilimanjaro, but what we really mean is that we admire the holder of the characteristic for having such a characteristic.

There are people who we are likely to admire but not to envy. The difference obtains when we do not want what the other person has, for when we have envy we have an associated desire, but there is no associated desire when we admire. (There may also be other differences between envy and admiration, such as differences in feeling, but the difference of desire is enough.) For example, I certainly admire Gandhi's life, as I do Jesus's, but I do not want to live a life like they did because although their lives were very great, they were also very unpleasant. I admire Gandhi's asceticism, for I do believe that it is somehow good to be ascetic, but I do not want to be an ascetic myself. My reasons for not wanting to be an ascetic like Gandhi is that I value my comfort and sensual pleasures very much, and I think that they are worth more than self-willed privations. Whether the disvalue of asceticism really outweighs the positive value of greatness from an objective point of view does not matter because the issue at hand (distinguishing envy from admiration) is one of psychology, not of axiology.

It is also possible to envy a person who we do not admire. The reasons for this can be that we want what a person has, but we do not think that she is a worthy, noble, or great person—I want the goods for myself and would take them despite the wretchedness. For instance, I would love to live the sybaritic lifestyle of a certain rambunctious young heiress who has good looks, fame, friends, and money. But I do not admire her at all—I think that she is of no good consequence. I do think that the looks, fame and money have value, but they are not enough to warrant my admiration of a person who has them, at least because the person in question may have several ignoble

characteristics such as frivolity, sumptuousness, concupiscence, naïveté and shallow relationships which, although desirable on some level, are not admirable.

3.2 Admiration and Approval

To say that something is admired is commendatory. We certainly hold some approval for that which we admire. A person's view of whatever is admired may not be entirely favourable, since it is quite possible to hate or fear what is also admired but there is *some* approval which will always come along with admiration, because when we admire we do make a positive evaluation of the thing admired. This is only fitting because greatness is a positive value, and part of seeing a value as positive is to approve of it. Even if the reader does not consider approval to be *part* of a positive evaluation, she would agree that approval is at least a psychologically natural consequence of such an evaluation. It would be an unusual mind (by which I mean an irrational mind) which sees a value as positive and does not approve of it.

Part of the favourability in being admired comes from the approval that goes with it. When we admire something we see it as good in some manner. Given that wit is seen as good and boorishness is seen as bad, it is quite consistent that the man at the dinner party, with his clever lavatorial innuendos, is admired for his wittiness and despised for his inelegance, whereas it would be an intellectual affront to suggest the possibility that he could be despised for his wit and admired for his boorishness. (Allow me to recast the statement clearly for greatness: his wittiness is seen as a great-making quality even though, on the whole, it fails to effect greatness in this flagrant vulgarian.)

The approval which comes with admiration can sometimes be a *moral* approval. When we admire God we are (amongst other things) approving of his actions. We think: this is a great person whose deeds are estimable. When we consider the moral actions of a person and find them exceptionally good we are inclined to admire the person, at least insofar as they are a moral agent.

When admiration is of something from a moral perspective then the admiration is, in many ways, moral approval.

Every so often a small article appears in the Saturday newspaper about some chap in Japan where the honourable code of bushido still remains, or in rural England where country gentlemen roam. This chap stumbles across a briefcase or a trove containing a fortune in bank notes or gemstones. The Samaritan then takes the fortune to the police who return it to their grateful and rightful owner. When the honest Samaritan insists on remaining anonymous and on refusing any reward, we admire him for his good and difficult deed, even those of us who maintain that he is a guileless sucker. It is unlikely that we would admire him unless we judged his deed to be good, for otherwise we would have little reason to judge him as great, and some reason to consider him a merely quaint and silly man. A judgement of goodness comes with an attitude of moral approval and so, when a person is admired for their goodness, they are objects of moral approval. Therefore, in certain cases, admiration of an object implies moral approval of that object.

Of course, not every case of admiration is a case of moral approval. Hitler and Alexander the Great, for example, are not ordinarily admired for their righteousness. They are admired for their strength of character and influence on the world. The manifestations of both these qualities were emphatically wicked in the cases of these two men, and so the admiration that comes to them does cast them as the objects of moral approval.

As I explain elsewhere, much righteousness makes for greatness in men and so a man may be great as a moral person. From that point of view he can be admired, and from the selfsame point of view he will be the recipient of moral approval. Only when it is clear that the moral aspect of a person is the facet of their being which arouses our admiration for them, then to say that they are admired is also to say that we morally approve of them. In the section on greatness and morality I write of how greatness entails an increased value of a thing and thereby warrants more respect of

that thing, which may also explain why admiration is a positive evaluation and one which calls for approval of that which is great.

3.3 Aspectuality

When concrete things are the objects of admiration they are admired for possessing certain aspects. These aspects are those which the admirer would consider to be great-making aspects. A man may be admired insofar as he is competent, influential, wilful and so on. Although he may be obscenely portly, when he is admired as ballast he is really not being admired as a man, because massiveness in not an important aspect of his personhood. In such a way the attitude of admiration resembles the aesthetic attitude. When a person adopts the aesthetic attitude he considers an object in a certain way, and that way is aesthetically or artistically. Whilst wandering through an art gallery, a person does not consider Rembrandt's *Night Watch* in terms of its potential to catch the wind on a blustery day like a sail. Instead they consume it only insofar as it is art. Its aerodynamic properties are irrelevant to the aesthetic attitude in this case. Also, evaluating the *Night Watch* in terms of its fitness as a hurled missile is not, in any way, having an aesthetic attitude towards it. When people and other things are admired they are considered in terms of their greatness and with a focus on a certain aspect of the things, such as its humanness, artworkness or whatever.

Admiration is aspectual in that when we admire something we do not just admire that substance standing alone; we admire it as a member of a kind. We admire that thing as a painting, or as a musician or as a man. Furthermore, we can fail to admire, or even outright despise, the same thing from a different angle. I admire Schopenhauer as a philosopher, though I think he was a despicable man. His philosophical work is insightful and he deserves admiration for it. Whilst we were pleasantly pixelated on cheap muscadel and wearing our customary paper hats, some good friends and I spent many hours delighting in Schopenhauer's philosophical writings for they contain a cynicism and a pessimism which are entertaining to scoff at, yet are also poignantly perceptive.

But Schopenhauer as a man was a failure who deserves contempt because he never developed any deep (positive) social relationships; he was irascible, petty and he lacked the integrity to live as he claimed one ought to live. Had he been with us that evening he would have built his hat out of the obituaries and spitefully burned ours while we still wore them on our heads! We would surely have needed to lock away the ladles.

Here I ought to caution the reader that I do not mean to say that admiration is very much like the aesthetic attitude. Although aspect and focus are important to both admiration and the aesthetic attitude, admiration differs markedly from the aesthetic attitude in that it involves making a judgement, whereas the aesthetic attitude involves adopting a cognitive position in order to make a judgement. A person viewing a work of art with the aesthetic attitude may very well judge an object to be entirely hideous, whereas the object of admiration must always be judged to be, at least, in some part, great.

3.4 The Judgement in Admiration

When something is admired it is deemed to be great according some aspect. It would be a funny day when ordinary folk go around admiring what they also despise. As has just been mentioned regarding aspectuality, one thing can be admired for one of its aspects and despised for another, but to despise and admire for the same aspect? That would be madness, an only people who have gone bananas would be capable of it. The reason a person who both admires and despises is a lunatic, is that admiration and despite each contain contrary beliefs. When we admire we judge that the object of admiration is great, whereas when we despise we judge that the object is wretched. Since wretchedness implies that the thing is not great, an admirer-despiser believes that the same thing is both great and not-great (with respect to the same aspect). The general case given above hangs together so nicely that, I would say, it is probably true; so where there is admiration there is a judgement of greatness.

3.5 Admiration and Success

This is not to say that when a person admires something they have succeeded in noticing its greatness, for sometimes very mean things are recognised in practice or considered in thought as great by the unsophisticated, when, in fact, they are not great. Admiration is not like perception in this sense—we often use perception terms in the act-object sense to indicate that an object exists and the percipient succeeds in noticing it. When we announce that a lady smells a tureen of vichyssoise around the corner we usually mean that there is such a tureen of vichyssoise which the lady becomes aware of through her olfactory senses. But admiration can be, and often is, misguided, so that people admire what is base and fail to admire what is great. In everyday conversation, when we report that something is the object of admiration we do not usually mean to insinuate that the thing is also great. Actual admiration is not strong evidence that something is great. Again, compare this with perception: when I say the sergeant sees an enemy on the ridge I am also suggesting that there is an enemy on the ridge. We usually take people's perceptions to be veridical. But when I say that the boatman admires Kurtz it we do not take it as evidence that the boatman has discovered Kurtz's greatness and therefore admires him. People are too frequently mistaken about greatness and misguided in their admiration for us to take admiration as a reliable sign of greatness; therefore we cannot take admiration to entail greatness. In the case of vision, most things, such as chairs and tureens, are easy to perceive under normal circumstances, but greatness is typically hard to apprehend even under normal circumstances. Please note that I do not intend to make claims about what perception *really* means, only about how ordinary people use and understand perception terms.

At this point I should include a proviso: further along in this chapter, I suggest that, in some cases, greatness can be grounded in actual admiration to the point that the greatness of a man is made of the admiration afforded to him by society. In such cases the attitude will precede the fact.

Let it be known now that this theory of greatness will be mostly rejected. Though if it were true then it might lead to admiration becoming a blanket success term where the admiration of something will entail that it is great and so greatness will be subjective.

3.6 Admiration and Respect

The term *admiration* is often used synonymously with the term *respect*. Such use cannot be condemned because oftentimes we correctly use these words synonymously. For instance, when talking casually we can say “I really respect that fellow,” or “I really admire that fellow” and for all common intents we are saying the same thing. The concepts connected to these terms closely overlap and, for some speakers, are equivalent. However, it is well worth our while to draw useful distinctions between these concepts. Let us begin by looking the type of respect we speak of when we use it synonymously with admiration.

Stephen Darwall points out that there are two kinds of respect. The one kind he calls *appraisal respect* and it “consists in a positive appraisal of a person or his qualities. As such, it does not essentially involve any conception of how one's behaviour toward that person is appropriately restricted. ” The other kind of respect is *recognition respect* which “is a disposition to weigh appropriately some feature or fact in one's deliberations. [...]To have recognition respect for persons is to give proper weight to the fact that they are persons.” (Darwall, 1977-1978, p. 39) There is good philosophical utility in making this distinction. Admiration is a combination of these two kinds of respect, in a different flavour and also with something extra. When we admire we do make a positive appraisal of the thing we admire, which is that it is great, *and* we take the some feature of the thing, which is its aspect of being a person or a man or a painting, into consideration for our actions.

Darwall is focused on respect for people. Darwall also maintains that only persons are appropriate objects of appraisal respect—at least in this way admiration and respect are not identical. I think it is quite possible to admire a novel or a war. We don't have to *like* the novel or the war, nor hold it in high *moral* regard, but we may still admire it, give positive appraisal to some elements of the thing and also desire to honour it.

Kant even writes that:

> Respect applies always to persons only—not to things. The latter may arouse inclination, and if they are animals (e.g., horses, dogs, etc.), even love or fear, like the sea, a volcano, a beast of prey; but never respect. Something that comes nearer to this feeling is admiration, and this, as an affection, astonishment, can apply to things also, e.g., lofty mountains, the magnitude, number, and distance of the heavenly bodies, the strength and swiftness of many animals, etc.
>
> (Kant, Practical Reason, I.3)

My feelings are that respect *can* be applied to non-persons, but that is because my understanding of *respect* is that it involves preserving, promoting and protecting the values of a thing, including values such as dignity, beauty and greatness. I will discuss this further in the next chapter. For now, however, let us take admiration as the kind of respect (appraisal plus recognition) which, as Kant says, "can apply to things also." One more thing about Kant's passage above is that it shows how admiration can apply to non-persons, such as mountains. When we contemplate wars, which are never pleasant, we can admire them for their effect on the world, for their body count, for their duration and so on. We admire these things because they make the war so much more impressionable and vivid and, in an unusual sense, more *real* (see the last chapter in the Nozick section for what *real* means).

Having admiration for something inclines one to behave in a certain way towards it. The desire which is a part of admiration is a desire to respect the object of admiration—suppose that Darwall would call this recognition respect. We can admire a thing without the desire to respect being effective, but by admiring we believe that the object is worthy of respect, even if we do not respect it *in action*. Since we have a belief that something is worthy we must have at least a velleity to respect it. This velleity, which in some cases may be a full-blown effective desire, is the desire which is contained within admiration.

I should clarify that "to respect x" is not really the object of conative attitude, which is part of attitude of admiration. I have been writing loosely in this regard. What an admirer *does* have are individual desires to act or desires for certain states of affairs which we can say are respectful desires to have. Think of it like this: Darth Vader has evil desires, but he does not desire to be evil. He desires to rule the galaxy with an iron fist, he desires that the noble wookies become a slave-race and he desires to destroy the entire planet of Naboo. Although we say he desires evil, we do not mean that evil is the object of his desire. Instead we mean that evil is a class to which many of the objects of his desire belong, or that his many desires are wicked. In such a way, having admiration inclines us towards actions, views and behaviours which can be classified as respectful. Although the dispositions to respect which partly constitute admiration might never happen to manifest, they certainly do exist, even if implicitly. It would be a strange thing to say that a person admires something if they do not have such inclinations. It would be psychologically bizarre for a person to slash a painting that they admire. Of course, they might do it if paid a million dollars—but that would be their love of money overcoming their inclination to respect the painting. All things being equal, they would *not* be inclined to slash a painting which they admired. It would also be odd for a man to lie to a person he admired or to slander him. The slander is not only strange because the admirer ought to have a positive opinion of the admired, but also because we expect the admirer to respect the admired. I have very little argument for this other than my folk-psychological intuitions, and

reflection upon my own experience, though I doubt that more evidence for this could be given. If some case were put forward of disrespect combined with admiration and no desires countervailing upon any respectful desires, I would sooner suspect the evidence than the rule. The connection between respect and admiration is that the respectful desires is either conjoined to or contained in the attitude of admiration.

3.7 Feelings of Admiration

This feeling of admiration is not always noticeable. A person may admire a thing but, whilst he is not considering it, it is doubtful that he would experience the feeling of admiration—at least it would not be due to that particular object of admiration. Sometimes, even when we have the object of admiration before our minds but are not considering it in terms of its greatness then that soaring and visceral sensation is still absent. So the occurrent having of this sensation is not essential to admiration and cannot be said to be a necessary constituent of the attitude. However, it is usually conjoined with the other components of admiration such as the belief of greatness, the inclination to respect that which is great, as well as the consideration of the aspect which makes the thing great.

In order to communicate the feeling of admiration I will attempt to describe it. At times, when we consider a thing which we admire, a certain feeling comes over us. It is a sort of rising sensation which begins deep in our belly, soars into our chests, proceeds through our throats and lifts up our heads, so to speak. On occasion it may elicit a tear or provoke a sigh. We are patient to a kind of gladness or satisfaction that such an admirable thing is present in this world. This feeling resembles the one which we experience when we are awestruck by the sublime glories of Nature. It is also like the feeling associated with pride in oneself or the pride which a parent feels when she regards the fine accomplishments of her child.

As an additional tactic to communicate the feeling associated with admiring something, I invite the reader to embark with me on an *exercise* of experience, because *describing* experiences is difficult in our language. How could we use the English tongue to describe terror, or the scent of nutmeg or the seeing of vermillion to a person who never had first-hand experience of these things, so that he could know them? The best which can be done, in language, is to appeal to other experiences—to suggest that terror feels like an unpleasant exhilaration, that nutmegs smells like mace, only warmer and more penetrating, and that vermillion is a vivid orangey red, close to cinnabar. In all these cases, it is the imagination of the curious sensate that works to construct the sensation, not the description. The best way, however, to let him know a quality of experience is *not* to *describe it*, but to *present it* to his senses, whereby it be directly or through the imagination. The medium of our guidebook to knowing the feeling of admiration is *language*, but it is our *imagination* that carries us.

I ask the reader to evoke in his mind an image of a person whom he admires. It is better if this person is not someone with whom the reader is closely acquainted. If he chooses a mentor, parent, lover or friend there is the risk that he will be unable to discern the feeling of admiration from other feelings such as love, in its various forms. It is also advisable that the reader does not choose any of his gods to admire, for a god, when connected to in thought, is apt to put the thinker into strange states—such as grace, enthusiasm, and madness—which may manifest certain of their own overpowering feelings. I have heard of people who turn their attention to their gods then find themselves giggling, shaking, weeping or using their bare hands to dismember sacrificial pards. Common feelings when people consider the gods include admiration—but this is frequently commingled with emotions of dread, guilt and love. It is best that the reader find a figure whom he *only* admires. Perhaps a historical figure or, perhaps a national hero, such as Nelson Mandela, Alexander the Great, Princess Diana, George Washington or Adolf Hitler would serve him well. Now consider those aspects of the person which you most admire. Consider his patience and noble

suffering, his self-assuredness and triumphs, her social status and graciousness, his honesty and popularity, or his wilfulness and vision. When turning your mind to these aspects of the admiratum, note the feeling which arises. Continue to entertain thoughts of the person from this point of view and note how the feeling endures as you admire him or her. Now focus your imagination on less admirable traits of the person such as his affection for common things, the transience of his accomplishments, her insipidness, his patriotism or his ugliness. As you do this, pay attention to how this feeling wanes. Then cast your mind to someone else whom you do not admire at all, someone base, petty, inconsequential or just unremarkable. Again, it is better this is not someone you are actually intimate with, try another historical or even a fictional figure—perhaps the ball boys in Wimbledon stadium, the fellow with a hat who sat across the aisle from you on the bus or guard number two in any of one of Shakespeare's plays. Now the feeling which came with admiration should vanish entirely. That feeling which came and went is the feeling of admiration.

3.8 The Similarity between Greatness and Admiration

There are many points of similarity between greatness and admiration. By appreciating these similarities we can come to see how these two concepts are intimately related to each other, which provides us with evidence as to how greatness and admiration can be co-extensive and as to how an *ought* arises between them.

For one, both greatness and admiration share aspectuality. Another point of conceptual contact between greatness and admirability is that both of them are rightly applicable in virtue of other qualities, and only a certain set of qualities count towards making something great or making something worth admiring. As to which qualities find themselves in this set depends on what aspect

of a thing is great or what aspect of a thing is admirable. And that the same set of qualities make a thing great as which make it admirable.

Respect is another link between the two concepts. When a person is admired, the admiration inclines to admirer to act respectfully towards the admired. Now, respectfully is how a great man (morally) ought to be treated, as I will establish in a later chapter. I do not know how much we can make of this link, though it does betoken a still deeper conceptual connection between greatness and admiration. The main connection I consider in this chapter is that great things *ought* to be admired. The ought I focus on is an ought of propriety which, as I shall expound on, is inclusive of a moral ought. However, for the moment, the reader needs only note that, at first sight, it seems that the ideas of greatness and admiration share some kind of intimacy. When we notice that a man and a woman exchange furtive glances and that they touch their hands or knees ever so delicately in passing and how, when the one departs from the room, the other will follow the one's movement, we suspect that there is more going on here—perhaps even an amorous affair. And so, due to the many conceptual points of contact between Admiration and Greatness, we have reason to suspect that there is more going on between these two than just their association with Respect.

Musicians and men are admirable or great when their musical artistry or manliness is abundant. Beauty, artistry and manliness are typically good qualities for a thing to have. I do not write "*typically* good" from a sense of philosophical timidity. In some cases, typically good qualities are not good qualities to have. For instance, beauty and manliness are typically good qualities. But beauty is an undesirable quality in much contemporary art, and manliness is a monstrous quality in a young girlchild. In such cases things should not be admired for having those qualities. Only a Philistine would admire modern art for being beautiful, and he would be a deranged parent who puffs out his chest and parades his mannish little princess for all the world to see: "She is only three years of age, and behold the gorgeous sheen of her moustaches!"

Of course, it is not feasible to go through the entire list of different aspects and which qualities make them great and which qualities make them worthy of admiration to show a their perfect correspondence. I happen to be very fond of brute force proofs due to their unpopular inelegance, but they are not always possible. In this case I doubt that it is even *possible* for there to be a finite list of the kind I have mentioned, making a proof by catalogue logically and therefore practically, impossible. For now I content myself with knowing that every instance that I can think of where a quality makes a thing *properly* admirable, it also makes it great.

3.9 Admiration as Greatness

One way of explaining the connection between admiration and greatness is to suggest that admiration wholly constitutes greatness. This kind of view would appeal to the social-constructivists and subjectivists. These people would like to reduce as many facts as possible, as well as those which are impossible, to the realm of the social or subjective such that they are true or false depending on whether some person or society holds them to be true. In my discussions on greatness in men with the folk milling about the university, several of them put forward the idea that greatness is a social construct. Since that sort of view is prevalent amongst university educated people from good families, this issue which otherwise I would not have taken seriously. The version of a subjective theory of greatness which I will deal with is the one that claims that greatness is wholly made of admiration. The reason I choose this theory is that it is a subjectivist position which is *special* to the topic at hand. Subjectivists ("general social constructivists" to be accurate, really—I just have a personal habit of calling it subjectivism) often proclaim that "x is the case because people consider it to be the case". The subjectivists and social constructivists who can be found at iniquitous bottle parties, in university literature departments and on the Continent tend to take their positions to extremes. They might claim that the truth of claims such as "rubies are red", "twice two is a four", "there is a god" and "The Old man and the Sea is about a fisherman" are all a mere matter of

opinion. I shall dismiss the extremists immediately—if everything is merely a matter of opinion then there is nothing special to say about greatness in this respect. Hence, I look at a subjectivist theory *specific* to greatness in order to critique it from an original angle.

Some facts, however, really do hinge on social or personal matters. Whether a person counts as famous does depend on how many people know of that person. The fact that some stuff counts as money has to do with people agreeing to count it as money, and whether something is a tool has to do with someone intending it to be used in a certain way, as Searle argues so persuasively in his *The Construction of Social Reality.* (Searle, 1996)

The position that greatness is something which is fundamentally a subjective thing is not utterly unreasonable, though it is not the position I hold. At first it seems that greatness really does fall into the realm of subjective things such as promises and fame and kingship. The reason for this seeming is that greatness, especially when concerning men, is very closely connected with things of a clearly social nature and some of these connections are not contingent ones, but lie within the realm of ideas. But even a necessary condition does not entail an essential composition, for example, it is necessary that the angles of a triangle add up to 180°, but the sum of the angles do not comprise the triangle—triangularity is a feature of the lines or edges which comprise the figure. As another example, it is necessary that whatever is obligatory is permissible, but permissibility does not make the obligation, it is something else (perhaps God's word or happy consequences) which make an obligation.

When greatness is thought of, especially when it is applied to men, many things which are socially constructed come to mind. We think of praise, kingship, fame and honours and, of course, admiration. These things have to do with states of mind or social facts. Praise is clearly a social act, kingship requires that a community regard a person as a king, fame requires that a good proportion of a community know of the famous person and view her in a positive light, honours are goods

conferred with the intention to reward or praise, and admiration is an attitude usually directed at a great person.

In the following I show that it is mistaken to assert that admiration is conceptually fundamental to greatness because admiration is favourable in the wrong way and because it is neither necessary for greatness nor sufficient for greatness. The position I shall take issue with is the one which asserts that admiration is a necessary and sufficient condition for greatness, and a thing is great to the extent that it is admired, and that it is great with respect to what it is admired for.

3.9.1 Divergence from Favourability

One point of divergence between the concepts is that regarding favourability. It is considered to be a good thing to be admired and a good thing to be great. However, the *way* in which it is good to be admired differs from the *way* in which it is good to be great. Therefore the favourability of both admiration and greatness does not count towards the strength of their conceptual connection, moreover it provides still more evidence against the position that being admired and being great are one and the same.

The goodness in being admired comes wholly from the benefits of being admired. Admiration does not make the object of admiration intrinsically better. When a person is admired they are regarded in a favourable light by the admirer. It is indubitable that it is desirable and good for a person's peers to look upon him positively and it is within the positive light that an admired man's benefit accrues: he will get invited to more parties, it will be easier for him to acquire debt and it is more likely that someone will back him up in a knife fight.

In many cases there are only a few benefits to being great. People *ought* to treat you better, but they probably won't. It may, in reality, be very unpleasant being great. Great people such as Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and Jesus have not lead pleasant lives. Jesus's life may have

ended well—just not for him! Being great sometimes involves a noble suffering, and making oneself great often involves exerting one's will over hardships. There is some value in being great, however. Unfortunately, the value in being great is the least desirable value of all—a good for its own sake. The great-making virtues are not virtues because they make a thing better in its environment, such as speed for a gazelle or ingenuity in a person. They may *happen* to harmonize a thing with its situation in a beneficial way, but what makes the virtue great-making is that it gives the thing more *intrinsic* value. A man is not made great by enjoying a pleasant life; he is made great by being the better man.

Since the good in being admired has to do with benefits *resulting from* being admired and the good in being great is in *being* great, these cannot be one and the same thing.

3.9.2 Admiration is Not Necessary for Greatness

Admiration is not necessary for greatness because it is quite possible for a person, or something else, to be great and to go unadmired. Consider the case of the secret hero. The secret hero is *not* a crime-fighting superhero in spandex hose and a mask, because although the public do not know the costumed superhero's real identity, they are still acquainted with him in his costume and so may (and probably do) admire him. By the secret hero I mean a person who does significant as well as good deeds without anyone knowing about it. He sneaks around under cover of darkness doing great things despite discomfort and danger. By day he is a humble cobbler and amateur miniaturist, but by night he skulks about the town and rescues baby sparrows from a lethal chill and dives into the village well where, by strength of his own two hands, he pulls out the vile debris that accumulates there. No one knows that any of these deeds have been done at all so they cannot even admire an unknown benefactor. His humility even prevents him from admiring himself—he sees his acts as borne from duty and shuns acknowledgment. If greatness wholly consists of being admired

then this diurnal-cobbler, sparrow-saviour and well-diver cannot be counted as a great man because he goes unadmired, yet he is greater than many an emperor or commander-in-chief.

If admiration were necessary for greatness then we would also have to deny the possibility of greatness to anchorites and outcasts, which we may be unwilling to do. Surely a forgotten anchorite—holy, humble and independent—can count as great. He may even be especially great if he is humble and does not even admire himself. So too might the social outcast be great who holds fast to his noble, though unpopular, code be great, even though he is actively despised and rejected by society. Therefore it is not necessary for a person to be admired by any other person nor by a society in order for him or her to be great.

3.9.3 Admiration Not Sufficient for Greatness

If it were the case that being admired made a person great then it would be impossible for us to be mistaken about the greatness of a person or thing because admiration would entail both the belief that something is great and that it is great. However there are times when we would like to allow for the possibility of being in error about the greatness of a thing.

Consider a painting which is a forgery of the *Mona Lisa*. Surely the forgery is not a great painting—yes, we might admire it for being a great forgery or for being a great image, but it cannot be great as a work of art. However, a person who does not know it is a forgery will admire it. On the simplistic position of identifying admiration with greatness the forgery would be great merely because it is admired, which is wholly unacceptable. Therefore admiration is not sufficient for greatness. Some people may well find this objection unconvincing, so I present another case of admiration *sans* greatness.

There was once a famous cricketer who was captain of his country's cricket team and who was admired by many. They admired him for his achievements in the sport, for his proficiency at

captaining his team, for his constancy, patriotism, bravery, innovativeness and humility. Then a scandal transpired—this man was revealed to be complicit in match fixing. At first he denied the charges against him, but once it became clear that the evidence against him was too strong he withdrew his denial. People now saw him as an arrogant, lying, unprincipled traitor. He was far from being admired—he became positively despised.

We would naturally say that before his crookedness came to light he was a vile character although no one knew it. But if we take being admired as all there is to being great, then it would seem that the captain was great even whilst he was crooked because people admired him. Furthermore, it entails that he only lost his greatness once he was found out because thereafter he was no longer admired. However, our intuition inclines us to judge that the people were simply mistaken about the traitorous captain's greatness—he was not great simply because people admired him, in fact, he was not great at all.

3.10 That We Should Admire the Great

For anything, the answer to why we ought to admire it is that it is great. Why should I admire beauty? Because it is a great beauty which uplifts the soul to all who encounter it. Why should I admire this musician? Because she is a great musician who can stir the heart through a duct in the ear. Why should I admire this man? Because he is a great man.

I have little argument to support the claim that one ought to admire what is great. Though I am sure that now that I have formulated this claim and presented it to the reader, it will immediately resonate with him and he we agree with it as a truth he knew all along. Surely he could never reject "it is great" as a perfectly satisfactory answer to the question "why should it be admired?". Furthermore, for anything which is great, no one would deny that it ought to be admired at least insofar as it is great. Still, as this chapter has shown, there is a close conceptual connection

between admiration and greatness. We have no reason to disallow an *ought* as that which links them.

(1) Some Oughts

The kind of ought which holds between admiration and greatness cannot be a moral ought. The reason is that admiration is an attitude. It may be a morally good thing to admire what is great, but it cannot be a morally good *act.* Having an attitude, especially an attitude of judgement and appraisal, is not something which we can choose to bring about, so it cannot behove us to have it. The ought is not epistemic either. Epistemically, we ought to believe that something is great when we are presented with it and see signs of its greatness. Admiration contains the judgement that something is great; but admiration is not wholly epistemic since it also involves an inclination to act and, possibly, the having of certain feelings. Once can have the belief that something is great but just not care, and therefore not *admire* the thing. He has satisfied his epistemic obligation but he still does not admire. The ought might be rational—and indeed a perfectly rational person would admire that which is great. The rational ought allows for appropriate beliefs, feelings and desires. But our response to a person who does not admire that which is great is not merely that he is irrational. We disapprove of such a man, we are repulsed by him—we think he is somehow *improper.* Furthermore, the rational ought would only apply between the *perceiving* of greatness and having the attitude of admiration. The conceptual connection we have discovered indicates an ontologically stronger connection—one between greatness *itself* and having the attitude of admiration. The ought which I think links greatness and admiration is the *ought* of propriety, and I think that some of what accounts for this ought being the link we are looking for is that it *is* quite rational to follow perceived greatness with admiration, as I shall explain henceforth.

(2) Rational Judgement and Admiration

For simplicity, let us begin by looking at the rationality of admiration for greatness. Before we inspect the minute aspects of admiration it is quite adequate for us to employ our everyday, common-sense, understanding of the term. Now, it is rational for a person who counts something amongst the great to also admire it. The rationality of this is far stronger than the position that admiring a thing and considering it to be great are merely compatible; for considering an object to be cuddly and seeing it as a friend are also compatible, but this shows no interesting connection between thinking of cuddliness and holding an attitude of friendship.

The rationality between the idea of greatness and the attitude of admiration is that a person who counts something as great is compelled by reason to also admire that thing. Sadly, amongst men, reason often doesn't compel us. There are people who seek out danger although they ought to fear it, people who enjoy pain although they ought to dread it, people who despise pleasure and other madmen who have the least rational combinations of attitudes to beliefs, desire, values and experiences.

Now let us take an ideally rational man. This fictional entity can be observed in laboratory of our minds to see how he views the great and how he admires it.

The rational man does indeed admire what he judges to be great, and such admiration does not come after he sees the greatness of the thing. He does not acknowledge that Gandhi is great and then, after long consideration, come to admire him. Once the rational man sees the greatness in a thing he immediately admires it. Were he ever to say that he counts something as great yet does not admire it we would think him to be mistaken about the state of his own mind. And the reverse applies, too. Should he admire something, he would also view it as great in some way.

The logical connection between the two, in the mind of a rational man, is that if, and only if, something is admired then it is considered to be great. Even so, logic and rationality are not identical. Principles of logic connect contentful *sentences*, but the rational connection between contentful *mental states* has to do with how a human mind works according to the laws of Nature. Indeed, the distance travelled between a building in the north of the city and a point at the south of the city is shorter for a crow in flight than a motorist taking shortcuts, but this is not due to geometry—it is due to the nature of time and space, which can be described geometrically. Geometry and logic describe principles, whereas Nature and the natural mind compel action.

(3) On What Propriety is

Appropriateness refers to a kind of fit between things which seems "right" and is related to that quality which is responsible for irony in a situation. It may, in some cases, cover certain moral fittingness, such as when a heinous act is punished in a severe manner. In these cases we think the punishment to be fitting. But appropriateness is more than this, for there are times when a heinous act goes unpunished, but it nevertheless has disastrous natural consequences for the perpetrator. In such cases we find the outcome quite satisfying for its appropriateness and we call it ironic. Were the malefactor to somehow prosper from his evil deed, we may also call it ironic but would not count it as appropriate.

Other terms, aside from appropriate, which can help capture the idea which I am trying to express here are: fitting, suitable, meant-to-be, *tao*, harmonious, correctness, properness and propriety. The term propriety is usually used for appropriateness in social interactions where it refers to the etiquette, but in this paper I will usually use it as equivalent with the word appropriateness. Although it is a mark of consideration to the reader to only use terms close to their normal meaning I have chosen to employ propriety in this way because it is does have some overlap in meaning with appropriateness, they have an etymological ancestor and, stylistically, propriety has

fewer syllables, making it terser; and as the reader has gathered by now, terseness is a feature I strive for in my writing.

Wherever there is this fittingness of things we see things occurring as they ought to. When it comes to attitudes, rationality often tracks fittingness. We not only think that it is rational for a person to fear what is dangerous, but also that it is appropriate for them to do so. Of course, rationality often explains why some these things are fitting, but appropriateness covers far more than this. There is also an aesthetic kind of appropriateness, such as when one might want to group beautiful things together—it would be inappropriate for the statue of David to be displayed in Disneyland, though an old European city suits it quite nicely. From this it would seem that fittingness is a matter of value, such that more fitting situations are ones in which more value obtains, whether it is epistemic, rational, aesthetic or ethical.

But there are also cases where we see appropriateness without there being any obvious (traditional) value involved, such as in the case of nature and of social propriety. In nature it seems "right" for birds to fly free, for blossoms to bloom richly in the spring, for summer to be warm and winter to be cool and for tigers to prey on peacocks. Yet there are cases of birds confined in cages, of malnourishment that retards the blooms, of cold snaps in summer or heat waves in winter and, in certain Oriental temples, there are cases of the tigers that subsist on naught but vegetable matter and compassion. These cases are not unnatural, just uncommon, and yet we count them as an affront to Nature, and they do not sit well with us. Nothing is working as it ought to, the system has broken down and proper functions are not functioning properly. Everything is, somehow, *inappropriate*.

Readers who are familiar with the Oriental concept of the *tao*, will already have good grasp of the propriety of which I speak. They will see that for something to be in accord with

appropriateness means that it is in accord with the *tao*. Elwell-Sutton writes the following of the *tao*; it may seem a touch flossy, but I found it in a reputable journal:

> It is the nature of the Tao to be harmonious, and in the divine scheme of things it is therefore intended that there shall be concord of "yang" and "yin." And sometimes, somewhere, the Poet and Dreamer could believe that he had achieved contact with an ideal Unseen World, where mystic harmony really did exists, where the Tao really functioned without ugly aberrations and discords that manifested themselves on earth as wars, floods, famines, earthquakes...marring its processes there. These were evil things; their source, that lack of harmony, not Nature itself, not the nature of man or beast, not "yang" nor "yin."
>
> (Elwell-Sutton, 1937, p. 87)

The point being made is that accord with the *tao* involves things fulfilling their ideal proper function and working harmoniously with each other. I have always thought that the concepts of *yang* and *ying* were either not cogent, inapplicable or uninformative, however, the reader might find the following enlightening. The passage describes propriety in nature:

> So long as there was Harmony between the two [yin and yang], the sequences would be Good—good, that is, in a broad sense. The heavenly bodies would continue on their due courses, regulating the orderly processes of the seasons; the rains would fall, the mists rise, the earth bring forth its appointed fruit. There would be neither floods nor earthquakes not devastating storms. Every living thing would fit itself into its appropriate place, functioning smoothly in harmony with the divine purposes of gods and spirits and ancestors.
>
> (Elwell-Sutton, 1937, p. 86f.)

The Stoics also have a notion of living in accordance with nature. When they say a person ought to live according to nature, they mean more than his acting according to human nature, for there also a *cosmic* nature which a person ought to live according to (Irwin, 2002, p. 347).

The propriety of social situations is sometimes based on politeness where propriety is a simple matter of appropriate behaviour being polite behaviour, and inappropriate behaviour being rudeness. In other social situations, behaviour is appropriate when it is fitting for a person's role or status. Morality aside, a physician should be knowledgeable and helpful when it comes to health matters, a king should be wise and authoritative and concerned about the welfare of his subjects and it is only proper for a skivvy to perform her menial tasks and no more. Were she to talk back to her master or, heavens forbid, to presume to meddle in his superior affairs of commerce or even domestic management, it would be counted as (socially) improper, which it is. The propriety is not a question of rights, dignity or authority—it is a matter which can be best described as a matter of appropriateness.

(4) The Great Ought to be Admired

Ethics is perhaps the most shallow and insular of the philosophical disciplines. Ethical discourse bottoms out on our intuitions and hunches rather quickly when compared to philosophy of mathematics or metaphysics. Furthermore, ethics calls for relatively little external support from outside its field. Philosophy of mathematics draws on the work on mathematicians, and metaphysics draws on the work of physicists, our internal experiences as well as our sensory experiences.

In normal circumstances, where everything gets its oughts, a person who is presented with something that is great will admire it. If the person thinks, knows and acts properly then they would end up admiring that which is great. Epistemically, they ought to know and therefore believe that it is great. If the person's mind is good and healthy they should acknowledge the value of greatness and so have appropriately respectful desires towards it. Since respecting the great is morally

incumbent on us (as I will show in the next section), these desires are a morally appropriate attitude to take, and will possibly be accompanied by the right moral sentiment, which is the feeling of admiration in this case. With the right beliefs, desires and feelings the person admires what is great. Having the right beliefs, desires and feelings means everything is running *appropriately*.

For a psychological insight, from the Stoics, as to how we derive the *ought* of propriety, Cicero writes:

> We are the only animal that has a sense of what order is, what seemliness is, and what good measure is in words and deeds. Therefore, no other animal perceives the beauty and charm and pattern of visible things. Moreover, our nature and rationality transfer these things by analogy to the mind, thinking that beauty, consistency, and order must be preserved in one's decisions and actions.
>
> (Cicero, On Duties, I.14)

The most forceful reason to accept that we ought (for the ought of propriety) to admire what is great and that what is great ought to be admired is simply that it *seems* so.

Now that we have a richer understanding of admiration, greatness and propriety, our intuition should reveal to us the connection between these concepts. Surely, it is improper for a person to admire a gnat, or to admire a scruffy hillock, or a petty starlet, or a street urchin; and it would be improper for a person to *fail to* admire Julius Caesar or Buddha. Furthermore it seems so appropriate for them to admire Julius Caesar and Buddha. Greatness and admiration fit together with an ought of propriety. Everything which is great ought to be admired and that which ought to be admired is great.

4. Greatness and Morality

This chapter considers ethical issues surrounding the great man. There are certain rights and duties which arise from differences in greatness, such as those of merit and respect. This chapter argues that the great man is due more goods and more respect than lesser men. Furthermore, an explanation is given as to why great man is due this extra respect and what such respect consists of. Much of it turns on the great man having more value than lesser men, and that much of this extra value is tied up in his personhood. Aside from our duties towards men who are great and their duties toward the lesser men, there is a matter of our obligations towards the greatness itself in a man. A person's character counts significantly with respect to their greatness, as well as for their moral calibre. Nevertheless, greatness and goodness are different; so this chapter also explores how some virtues count towards greatness, goodness and heroism in order to clarify the distinction and bring us to a better understanding of greatness for a man. Then greatness is investigated as a virtue itself, to understand how it relates to the virtues. This chapter also returns to the topic of the distinction between moral goodness and greatness and examines the relationship between the two.

4.1 Merit and Desert

When it comes to distribution of goods, great men should be given more. At first, in my reflections on the topic, I thought that they *simply* merited more for being great, just as a victor deserves a reward simply for overcoming the competition. However, upon further reflection, I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing in greatness itself which automatically and immediately leads to the great man deserving more than lesser men. Great men *do* deserve more, but this desert is founded on the respect owed to them. For this section and the next, until the section on respect, I

argue that great men do not merit more *simply for being great*. In the section on respect I will show how great men deserve more and that it is neither a *simple* nor an *immediate* matter of greatness begetting merit since greatness and merit are connected by respect.

Greater men are valuable because of their other values. These values may include moral goodness or accomplishments—an accomplishment is a value in the sense that it is good to have accomplished something—it's a characteristic which makes an axiological difference. Having these values alone might account for the man deserving more as a reward or as recognition of an accomplishment as a great climber or a great physicist. But great *men* are often made great, in part, by their greatnesses in aspects other than their humanness, and the greatness in these other areas can make a man merit more. They are also made great by their various virtues. Giving a great man more in virtue of him being a great man is superfluous. This is not to say that there is not more value in being a great man than merely the sum of other values, for I think there is, but I do not see how it merits more.

When I was a schoolboy one of my contemporaries was a fellow who we called Butch Goldenthal, who received awards for academic achievement, for extramural social work (helping destitute street urchins), for leadership (which I think was really just an award for being popular with the teachers) as well as for excelling in rugby, cricket and every other sport he tried his hand (or foot) at. At a school assembly near the end of the year, Butch received yet another accolade: Best Achiever. I still think it is a redundant award: an award for receiving awards. If we maintain that a great man deserves more for being a great man over and above what he deserves for that which makes him great, this is redundant.

4.1.1 The Generalist

Greatness, however, is something over-and-above the having of all these goods, virtues and accomplishments. There is something special about having them *all in one person*. It is rare, difficult

and enriching to have so many diverse goods. Should the over-and-above count for extra merit and admiration? I certainly think so, but I do not think that this shows why great men deserve more. Let us compare greatness with the great-making quality of being a accomplished generalist. The crux of the analogy is that being great like being an accomplished generalist in that it is comprised of other goods or accomplishments, but also is something more than merely their sum. The use of the analogy is to show how it breaks down.

Butch Goldenthal also received a Best All-Rounder medallion. I can appreciate this accolade—for there is certainly something admirable in being an accomplished generalist. What is so admirable about being an accomplished generalist? Firstly, it is *hard*. Human persons have limited time and resources plus we have a natural inclination to indolence, despair and ennui. In order to become an accomplished all-rounder, humans must organize their time, be canny in allocating of their vigour, overcome their natural inertia in order to rise early, persevere through frustrating setbacks, stay focused on the task at hand, constantly motivate themselves and also learn to appreciate the value in a diverse range of activities. Those men and women who do this by themselves are deserving of much admiration.

Sometimes, generalists do not always deserve so much admiration for the hardness aspect of being a generalist. These are the ones for whom it is easy or for whom it is hard in the wrong sort of way. It is easier for God and the Buddhas than it is for humans because these supramundane persons exists outside time and space and have limitless energy. Humans work within limitations and sometimes overcome those limitations, which ennobles their works. This is why we put extra value on the Christmas cards painted by armless—and sometimes also legless—veterans. Some people have been forced into accomplishing things—it is still hard for them but the overcoming was not of themselves by themselves, it was of themselves by an outside agency. There are tales of girls in the Orient who are forcibly alienated from their families by the Glorious State Olympic Committee. GSOC presses them into excellence as gymnasts through a dictatorial regime whereby

they are forced, under threat of certain pains as well as through certain mind-altering propagandas, to rise early and train for hours until their muscles tear and until spasms wrack their young bodies. John Stuart Mill was formed, by chisel, strickle and swage, into a man of diverse knowledge and keen intellect through the efforts of James Mill, Jeremy Bentham and the little-known David Ricardo. Both Mill and the gymnast suffered for their accomplishments, but it was not a suffering which they freely took upon themselves, and so their suffering calls for pity rather than for admiration.

The second admirable feature of the generalist is *richness*. The generalist is one person who unifies a diversity of goods by having them. That is, they come together in him. From the point of view of Nozick, unity of a diversity is what value is, and even to those with common intuitions, this organic unity is seen as something of value. Nozick considers intrinsic value to be a unity of a diversity and that people tend to unify very many things—so surely this person with so many values should have a high intrinsic value. (Nozick, 1990, pp. 162-5) We do not need to agree with Nozick that organic unity is all there is to value, but we can (perhaps) concede that it is a valuable thing.

Richness, however, will not always apply in the case of great men because sometimes a man is made great through greatness in only one aspect of himself. If we take Mother Theresa and Sir Edmund Hillary as great people, then only Mother Theresa's marvellous goodness makes her a great human being, and only Sir Edmund Hillary's accomplishment makes him a great man. Some theories of greatness, such that greatness is just exceptional impact, goodness or wilfulness, are monistic are therefore do not allow for other values to count towards greatness.

Since it is possible for a man to be great without having a diverse array of great-making values and without satisfying the criterion of difficulty for admirable generality, great men do not merit more merely because they are great, even though greatness does entail them having some other goods. Being an all-rounder is worth something, and that worth imports itself into making a man great. However, if a great man is rewarded for his greatness it should not be in addition to him

being an achiever *and* an all-rounder, in other words for having many goods to a high degree. Each of those goods (by which I mean great-making qualities) merits goods accordingly, and having an array of goods can warrant its own reward. Many great men are made great by having many goods to a high degree, and so they do merit much—but the merit comes from the goods, collectively and distributively. But if such a man were to be rewarded over and above that for being great, he would be rewarded twice for the same thing—which is like paying a double tax, which is forbidden in all decent countries. This is akin to the Best Achiever award which Butch Goldenthal received but didn't deserve.

When great men are awarded, by which I mean no more than them receiving positive or good deserts, it is not a matter of merit for their greatness. It is for that which makes them great. Imagine two men who have an exactly similar set of great-making qualities. The one man has no great-breaking qualities such as miserliness, disreputable friends, anxiety and commonality. The other man has enough great-breaking qualities to a large enough degree to exclude him from greatness. The other man merits some goods for his great-making qualities, although he is not great. Should the first man merit something extra for not having despicable characteristics? That would be absurd (though he may merit more in the end because the other man's desert of evils has cancelled out his positive merit). But it is the lack of despicable characteristics which accounts for the one man being great and the other not. Therefore greatness itself does not immediately call for merit.

4.2 Greatness and Respect

4.2.1 Value of the Great Man

Great men have more value than lesser men. They are more noble, more important and rarer than the majority. Great men are worth more. In this age, which is an age of égalité, democracy, liberalism and humanism, to say that one man has more value than another is an affront

to fashionable morality. But this is just a mistake on the part of people who hold popular opinions of this sort. The mistake comes from their inconsistent views on value. As I understand it, most of them maintain that there are virtues or values which people can have. The fashionable values at this time are ones such as kindness, charity, humility, eco-friendliness and a sense of community. It would be absurd if these values *were not valuable;* so they must be valuable. But, if we are to take their being valuable seriously, then things which exemplify these virtues must be worth more too. And the fashionable humanists preach those virtues and condemn people who do not exemplify them—if these values did not make people more or less valuable, the fashionable humanist would have no grounds for their praise of Mandela and condemnation of Ivan the Terrible.

It is of value to a piece of art these days to be controversial, to be produced by a famous artist and to be obscure. Now the more controversial an artwork is and the more famous its maker is and the more inscrutable it is, the better or more valuable it is as an artwork. When one goes to the national art gallery and one has limited time, which artworks ought one to put at the top of his list to see? Surely, the more valuable ones. When the minister of defence declares himself the new president, and populace riots and the national art gallery is set ablaze, which art works ought one try to rescue first? The answer is simple: the more valuable ones.

To have values gives value—it makes the thing with those values more valuable. These values may include a man's character, history, physique and reputation. These can count as virtues because they are all formative of a man's identity. Part of what makes you the person who you are right now is that you have a certain character, that you have accomplished things in the past, that you have a certain hair style and that your community hold you in a certain regard. So when they count as values they make the person who has them more valuable, much like increasing the weight of the stones which make up a house will increase the weight of the house. One might object that this reasoning commits a fallacy of composition; but what else can account for the value of a thing aside from it having characteristics which count as values? Nothing I can think of. Furthermore, this

position stands well even if we say that all value is extrinsic or even instrumental. Even those who maintain that value is subjective might admit that *being valued (positively)* counts as a value because it is value-making.

Great men are more valuable amongst men. It would be rather empty to explain this increase in value as determined by their greatness, for it very well may be the case that greatness and exceptional value are the same thing. So let us take it that great men have more value because they have certain kinds of values to excess, at least when taken in comparison to the populational mean. For the sake of this chapter we need only agree that great men are more valuable than lesser men; it can be left open as to why this is so.

4.2.2 Greatness warrants respect

(Recognition) respect is due to that which has value and it is due to the appropriate degree which is, in part, a function of the its value.

The respect due to something is surely a result of the thing's value. This is why we would think it worse to tread mud into the marketplace than into a cathedral. Cathedrals have a sanctity and beauty which is lacking in marketplaces, although marketplaces do have some small degree of sanctity and beauty. The sanctity, in a social sense, comes from people believing that the place has significant to them. When a person does not care to treat such a places as having sanctity, or when they mar the place's beauty, these people are being disrespectful. Pristineness is another value which ought to be respected—such that besmirching a newly painted wall or driving your 4x4 across an untouched beach is wickeder than marking an ugly old wall or kicking up dirt in the wake of the Dakar rally.

It seems that something without value or disvalue, neither intrinsic nor instrumental, is neither due any respect, nor any consideration. Imagine an unexceptional chip of rough granite

amongst the others around the base of a sculpture. This chip warrants no respect—it can be destroyed without the tiniest remorse and it deserves no notice. Were a person to furrow his brows and squints his eyes and contemplate that chip, while caressing it lovingly, we would find such behaviour puzzling. Were he to object to its complete destruction or, on the other hand, *strive* for its complete destruction we would think it absurd. If the chip had some value then our puzzlement would cease and a case might be made for its preservation (or destruction). Let us give the chip a jot of instrumental value—the balloonist who lives next door comes to the sculptor to collect chips for ballast for his aerial excursions. In this case, the chip might contribute to the balloonist's enjoyment of his aeronautical adventures and so it would be spiteful to obliterate the tiny chip. The balloonist might also examine the chip for exceptionally keen edges or acute points in case they tear his ballast bags, and we would not count him as mad for paying mind to the wee stone because, in some small way, it matters to his pleasure, which is a valuable thing. The stone might even have some intrinsic worth, such as it might have a pretty gleam or have the form of perfect platonic solid. In such cases its gleam and shape are worth attention, and it would be wrongful to disrespect the chip by causing it gloom or distortion.

Since to be great is to have some values, that which is great warrants some respect. Sometimes the value is really something which is *generally* a disvalue such as wickedness or monstrousness, but is a great-making value in the specific case of greatness for, say, tyrants. So, in some cases, that which is normally a disvalue begets a positive value which is worthy of respect. The respect is also aspectual, in that being respected as a musician is different from being respected as an assassin. When we respect El Mariachi, the musical assassin, as an assassin we do so by avoiding him or by offering large payments for a hit; when we respect him as a musician we buy his album. Respect is not always positive in the sense that it is good for the object respected. If something is respected for its danger, the respecter may be moved to avoid or destroy the thing. Kant points out that respecting someone's wickedness involves punishing them. Greatness, however, is a positive

value which usually requires a positive show of respect. Positive shows of respect include acts such as preservation and exaltation—in other words, acts directed towards the good of the object. This is not to say that that which is great is *only* due positive respect, for sometimes that which is great also has disvalues or even has disvalues which happen to account for its greatness. Furthermore, the respect we are interested in for the great man is the respect of humans, as humans. It follows from respecting someone as a human that they will be respected as a person since, at least, personhood is important to humanness. I do not mean to propose that respecting something as a human *is* respecting them as a person, only that it *involves* respecting them as a person.

4.2.3 Great men are due extra respect

Greatness is measured relative to a standard where that which is great has great-making qualities (which are values) in a relatively high degree (whether taken collectively or distributively). Let us take it to be the case that persons can give respect and are sometimes also obliged to give respect. I doubt that any readers will find this to be a controversial claim, so I will not attempt to make explicit any support for it. Persons can also be the objects of respect (I will explore what respecting a person involves later). Amongst we humans, most of whom are persons, we are due respect by other humans. Some of this respect obtains from our being living organisms, some of it from our being persons and some of it obtains from our particular conditions. One of these conditions can be that of being great, as a human. Those humans who are great are, all other things being equal, due more respect than those who are not great. And the respect they are due is a positive respect because greatness is a value (as opposed to a disvalue). If we take the view that greatness is not a value itself but a measure of the values which a thing has, then this still stands, for a great man will have a higher degree of some values or a wider array of values to a high degree than ordinary men and is therefore due more respect. As Darwall writes, “Insofar as we can give a sense to having more recognition respect for one thing than another it involves a disposition to take certain considerations as more weighty than others in deciding how to act.” (Darwall, 1977-1978, p.

46). When I speak of respect here, I mean more than the *disposition*—I mean respect actualised in behaviour.

4.2.4 Great Men Warrant Respect as Great Persons

We do not know how many and what kinds of persons there are in the world. There might be ghosts, angels, aliens and androids, some of which might be so great that, in comparison, all human persons are mean, base and despicable. However, since so much of what makes a man great is his greatness of person; amongst humans the greatest of them *as men* are also great *as persons* within that population. Generally, a great man is a greater person than ordinary men. Therefore a great man is generally due respect as a great person by other men, though not necessarily by other persons.

What does it mean to respect a person? Much has been written on this topic, which is quite an intricate one; however, we can accept, without too much fear of objection, that respecting a person involves respecting what makes them a person—which includes their having a will, desires, beliefs, goals, values, rights and autonomy (in some ways). When the thing is a person, if she is to be respected one must consider her will, feelings, values, autonomy and so on, and act towards them in the appropriate way. What is this appropriate way? In the case of great men the appropriate way to approach his feelings, desires and so on is as though they are worth more than those of ordinary men and that they have positive value and so should receive positive respect.

I remember once at garden tea-party I was chatting with a young hussy, named Prudence, of twenty years old who had taken as her lover a man twice her age. She complained to me that she had frequent yens for carnal satisfaction which her lover would only satisfy occasionally. He would complain that he was too tired or otherwise occupied. She asked me for my perspective on the situation. I told her that if the two of them were really in love then he would service her appetite even when he did not want to, assuming he is able. I drew an analogy to a less concupiscent kind of

bodily desire—the massage between lovers. Giving massages is boring and it makes ones hands hurt, but one lover does it for the other for no more reason that the other wants it and delights in it. Lovers ought to respect each other, and this respect means doing for the other what the other wants, merely because it is wanted. So when the older lover refused the younger, he was failing to live up to the love which she believed held between them. He failed to respect her as would be appropriate given the love which purportedly connected them.

4.2.5 How to Respect

When it comes to respecting men, most of what is involved consists of respecting them as persons. This includes respecting their will, rights, dignity, values, intellect and so on—all the things which make up a person. Aside from being a person, a human is also a living organism and ought to be respected as such. Humans also form societies in which they take upon diverse roles such as that of a mother, firefighter, teacher, village idiot, soldier, burgomeister, and so on. These too should be respected as they form part of the character of a human's personhood.

Persons are agents with a will, with accomplishments and so on. In order to respect a person's will one must enable it and not hinder it. If a person wants the drawing room painted maroon, then respecting his will means not preventing him from having it painted maroon and also, though it might not be obligatory, assisting him in realizing a maroon drawing room. Of course, people have aims which are more significant than the colours of the drawing room. People aim to wage war and to win them, to discover the secrets of nature, to cheat and to swindle, to take revenge, to bestow honours and to rule nations. All these goals, so long as they are the object of a person's desires, warrant some respect, though not necessarily absolute respect.

Accomplishments should also receive some respect, so long as they are valuable ones. Non-valuable accomplishments might not count as accomplishments at all, for that matter. Examples of respecting accomplishments include preserving Neil Armstrong's footprint on the lunar

sand, praising Ghandi for his commitment to peace and permitting accomplishments to be realised (as with respecting a will). Disrespectful accomplishments include stealing the flag which Sir Edmund Hillary planted on Mt. Everest's peak, slandering Nelson Mandela's relatively peaceful liberation of South Africa's majority and attempting to trump Roger Bannister's mile in less than four minutes. This is not to say that all disrespect is a bad thing to do—in fact I would think that in the last example a person ought to attempt to beat the record, but it is disrespectful nonetheless.

4.2.6 Hubris

Attempts at one-upmanship can, however, be prohibited on the grounds that they are disrespectful. Such attempts fall under the vice of *hubris*. Hubris obtains when a lesser person attempts to out-do the accomplishments or exceed the virtues of a greater person. Consider the tales of the Lydian weaver, Arachne, who first claimed that Athena had not been her tutor and that she was self-taught, and then she had the audacity to challenge the goddess to a competition on the loom; or consider Marsyas the satyr who attempted to best Apollo on the flute; or Niobe who announced from the summit of Mount Cynthus that her family is better than the family of any of the goddesses; or the builders of the tower of Babel who attempted reach heaven. Arachne's works were rent and she was transformed into a spider; Marsyas was hung by his feet and flayed alive, Niobe had each and every one of her children succumb to violent death; and the architects of Babel had their tower dashed and their languages confounded. These vengeances seem fitting—and to ancient minds (particularly to the minds of the priesthood), these vengeances counted as just punishments. Although competition between men of equal status is admirable, the attempt to overcome the achievements or ability of a greater person is wrongfully disrespectful. If the attempt is for the achievement itself then it is not a case of hubris—hubris requires that the lesser man aims at a goal with the mind to trump the achievements of the greater, or one that successfully outshines the greater man in that area and then boasts about it, or that he fails to outshine the greater man but claims that he does. In the latter case we have a case of both hubris and vanity.

To impress this upon the reader I ask him or her to gauge their moral feelings in response to the following scenarios. I have no doubt as to which way the gentle reader's moral compass will point. Regard the following as a self-imposed Voigt-Kampff test: A man attempts to outfast Ghandi—and does so. A man claims that he has outsuffered Jesus. A man claims that he is more intelligent than Aristotle and more virtuous than Socrates—he then consumes a potion of hemlock and films himself in rational discourse with his friends before he expires.

If, however, attempts to outdo another occur between men of equal status, such as between two great men or two petty men, our response is quite different. In the case of great men we can relish in the contest, pleased that these men are testing themselves against worthy opponents and we are exhilarated and inspired by them. When the competition occurs between men of little standing, we feel a small delight, such as that when watching a couple of puppies fighting over an old rag, grabbing it in their little teeth and squeaking as they tug it this way and that. Were you to hear that your neighbour was trying to win the title for man with the longest whiskers, you would surely be amused and you would probably also be pleased that he is striving for some accomplishment, however small. We hope that he does not pay it undue effort, or his endeavour would only seem pathetic even if he succeeds.

4.2.7 Respect Relationships

Let us map out how men of differing levels of greatness should be respected. All men, as persons and as living organisms deserve a minimum degree of respect merely for being persons and living organisms. *Minimum degree of respect* does not, in this context, mean that they should be giving as little respect as possible; instead, it means that there is a certain positive degree of respect which they are owed merely for fulfilling the aforementioned condition of being a living person.

Now this respect is not absolute. There are times when respect for one thing countervails on respect for something else. For example, men have a right to property and a right to life. All other

things being equal, one man's right to own property must give way to another's right to life. If we respect each man then we would not hinder a scruffy, emaciated urchin from stealing the baker's croissant, though we ought to swiftly intervene when Madame de Maintenon's chubby lapdog pounces into the pannier. The reason we respect these rights is out of respect for the baker, beggar and lapdog. Neither the baker nor the beggar warrant more respect than the other, but their rights are ranked, with the right to life surpassing property rights, so when we respect both of them then we respect their rights to the correct degree and treat countervailing ones appropriately. The lapdog, as a non-person, deserves less respect than the honest baker, and so her gluttonous desires receive less respect than the baker's right to property. (Though if the lapdog were prone to hypoglycaemia and could perish without vital sugars, a croissant ought to be administered immediately.)

When the same rights or other values are in conflict then we ought to favour the greater of those who hold them. Say that, through a series of misadventures, both Madame de Maintenon's lapdog and the scruffy urchin are trapped at the end of an alley when Cardinal Richelieu's drunken guardsmen stumble into the alley. These guardsmen are chagrined, due to a trouncing given by M. de Treville's men and so their blood is hot and they are looking for some living thing to give a sound beating to. Hearing a noise in the alleyway, you open the door to investigate and find the urchin and the lapdog in this hazardous situation. Which the two ought you usher into safety, while using the other as a diversion for the surly guardsmen? Surely the urchin should be saved the discomfort of the beating at the expense of the chubby lapdog. The reason that the urchin should be rescued from the beating is that he has more value in the world than the lapdog does, and so his comfort and right to freedom from pain is worth more too.

Since greater men should be treated with more respect than lesser men, it follows that great men should be treated with more respect than ordinary men, and with much more respect than wretched men. Who should treat these greater men as such? The ordinary men and wretches

should, of course, treat great men with more respect than they treat themselves. But so should the greater men—a great man ought to put his own will, rights, goods, values, reputation, autonomy and so on ahead of those of ordinary men. If he does not put his own good above that of lesser men then he acts wrongly by not paying due respect.

Epictetus tells us of a slave who is commanded to hold his master's chamber pot whilst his master employs the pot for its Proper Function (Discourses I.2). The slave comes to Epictetus for counsel. The master has threatened to flog the slave and withhold food if he does not comply. Despite the threats, the slave still does not want to hold the chamber pot. Epictetus tells him that it would be to his advantage to hold the pot instead of suffering beatings and starvation. As to the slave's dignity, Epictetus refuses to suggest a course of action because "It is you who know yourself, how much you are worth to yourself, and what price you sell yourself; for men sell themselves at various prices."

Great men hold no chamber pots but their own, if even their own. One value concerned in the case of Epictetus's slave is self-respect. The slave must choose whether he puts his desire (which is to avoid contact with the patrician's nightsoil) over the desire of his master (which is to enjoy a hands-free 'vacuation). If the slave is worth more than the master, then his will is worth more than his master's and he ought to respect himself by honouring his will. As to whether his will and integrity are worth more than the discomfort of a flogging is a matter of dignity. Whether the slave has more dignity than prudence is a matter which, Epictetus says, is up to the slave's integrity.

4.3 Obedience to God

For the men we know, the obligation to respect them has its limits. It is certainly not absolute. Although a certain great man might desire that another kill an innocent for him, it is doubtful that it would be right for the lesser man to commit murder. The lesser man has two moral

duties which are in conflict. The one obligation is to respect a greater man's desires through obedience. The other duty is to refrain from killing innocent persons. In most cases it is clear what the man's overriding duty is, which is to refrain from killing.

Now for many despicable acts we are hard pressed to find a command from greatness which overrides them. But the moral pressure behind a man's duty to obey those who are greater increases both in proportion the difference in greatness between the men and in proportion to the greatness of greater man. The simplest of several reasons for this is that the will of a greater man is more valuable than the will of a lesser man, and the will of a very great man has great value.

Men are not peculiar in their having of wills. All persons, human or not, have wills. Agency is essential to personhood. Therefore, if a non-human person is greater than a human, the human is beholden to respect the will of the greater person. Some of these greater persons may be angels, demons, bodhisattvas, ancestral spirits or Gaia. However, the commands of these great beings might be soundly trumped by other moral duties. Were an angel to command a man—any man—to torture a baby or rape a young boy or exploit the poor, in most circumstances the man could refuse the angel's bidding without a prick of conscience. But what of God?

God said to Abraham "Take now your only son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." (Gen 22:2) So Abraham took Isaac to a mountain in Moriah where "Abraham stretched out his hand and took his knife to slay his son." (Gen 22:10)

Did Abraham do the right thing? Despite our moral intuitions, proponents of the Divine Command Theory for ethics would be forced to say yes. This theory states that God wills moral facts—he determines whether some class of action is right or wrong, by his fiat. When God commands someone to do something they ought to do it because God's command *makes* that

course of action the right one. God does not command you to love your neighbour because it is right, it is right because he commands it.

A major problem with the Divine Command Theory is that it makes moral laws arbitrary. If this theory is correct then it could be obligatory or permissible to act in a way which our strongest intuitions hold to be immoral. God could command us to torture puppies or kill our beloved sons and, because God commanded it, it would simply and absolutely be the right thing to do. God could also command us to do ridiculous things which seem to have not moral importance, such as to refrain from driving on Saturdays or to only open our boiled eggs from the big end, and these acts would be obligatory.

When it comes to the case of Abraham, even William of Ockham tried to disinvolve God from the messy affair. (Sent. I.46.1) and Kierkegaard attempted to show that it is not an ethical issue:

> By his act he transgressed the ethical altogether and had a higher telos outside it in relation to which he suspended it. . . . Why, then, does Abraham do it? For God's sake and— the two are wholly identical— for his own sake.
>
> (Kierkegaard, 1985, p. 59)

Another problem with the Divine Command Theory is that it robs God of his goodness—we can no longer praise God for his righteousness because he would be righteous no matter how he was. God needs a moral standard independent from himself to measure himself by. The metre, for instance, is defined as the length of a particular bar kept at the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures in Sèvres. The length of the bar determines how long a metre is. Could it be meaningful to praise the bar's constancy on the basis that in all its years it has neither exceeded nor fallen short of

exactly one metre in length? Of course not. Such is the righteousness of God when his fiat determines what is righteous.

Most sensible folk, as well as many theistic philosophers, maintain that it is far more likely that the moral standard is independent of God's will. This makes the theists uncomfortable. I think I might have partial solution for them. The following solution will not make morality dependant on God. God will still maintain his authority, count amongst the righteous and when God tells you to do something, no matter what, it is right for you to do that.

Divine commands come from a person of infinite greatness to whom a man is but a speck. God is the greatest possible person and, according to some theologians and to almost all of the common theists, is a person of infinite greatness. Since God is the greatest possible person, it is likely that his greatness dwarfs the greatness of any human being and so the value of his will and the moral force of his demands would be very great indeed. If God is infinitely great (whatever that means), then although his greatness doesn't have a discrete value (since we shall be faithful to the term infinite), the difference between his greatness and any of ours is also infinite. Therefore we ought to respect God as a person to an infinite degree. The implication of this is that our obligation to surrender to the will of God vastly outweighs our obligation to any other moral duty.

God is good because he obeys the universal moral law that is independent of himself; and we humans are all obliged to obey his will. This obligation, although it is a *prima facie* obligation, cannot be countervailed by any other moral obligation. The high degree of respect we ought to have for God as a person also shows why it is wrong to blaspheme him, why he ought to be worshipped and why it is wrong to pray to any other of the lesser gods: it would be too disrespectful. The above argument should also work if we discard the *infinities* and just have the difference between the greatness of man and the greatness of god be very very large.

The fervent theomoralist should smile broadly at such a conclusion, for it pulls the divine command theory of right and wrong out of the philosophical mire in which it has dwelt for so many centuries. Although the Divine Command Theory has not been vindicated, it has been excused. No longer does the theist need to arrange reason, morality and the commands of God so that reason remains rational, morality remains reasonable and objective, and that God keeps his crown. Let morality be independent from the will of God! Even as an independent code, with strictures on respect and obligation, Morality binds us to the divine decree. Reason and Ethic both coronate God—for Reason and Ethic oblige a man to treat the word of God as always effective (although not absolute) law, and for those acts which the word offers no guidance, a man can fall back on reason and the moral code which is borne purely from reason.

The reasoning used in the above argument also filters down to our relationship to the lower animals. It shows how the desires, happiness and other features of personhood in humans have a moral preference over the lesser beings such as brutish animals, which are not persons (or are feeble persons) yet are minded. This demonstrates how they have fewer rights or rights of less weight than humans do because these animals are less great than humans.

4.4 The Import of Value in People

Having value should have some import, it should make a difference. Now some people have certain values which others do not and all these value-bundles they come in a variety of mixtures and quantities. A pile of bricks can be arranged into a great edifice such as the Taj Mahal, or into a terrible one such as concrete tenement. It makes a difference whether people have more of a certain value than others. The difference in value accounts for a difference in the worth of the person, how they ought to be treated and so on. What does it matter that a person has value and that he or she is more valuable than some other person? The most obvious answer is that they demand more respect. This is the case not only for men but for all things which are great. This is not

to say that things which are not great deserve no respect; it is just that they deserve less respect than things which are greater.

How this respect is manifest depends on the way in which the thing is great. We respect a great painting in quite a different way to how we respect a great ocean or a great person or a great general. Mount Everest may be respected by taking precautions during a climb and by refraining from littering upon its slopes. We are inclined to respect concert pianists who we admire by beng quiet during their recitals, praising their work and by purchasing (instead of pirating) their recordings. For people whom we respect *qua* people we are inclined to obey their will and to be polite towards them.

4.4.1 Preservation of Greatness

Not only are we obliged to respect those things which are valuable, we are also under some obligation to respect that which makes them valuable—their virtues. As I use "virtue", I mean it as something broader than a valuable character trait, and more exactly as referring any good or valuable characteristic which can apply to things other than persons. If value has any moral import on our actions it is that. The obligation to respect virtues is not one peculiar to greatness. Whatever it is which makes a thing great is a good, in some way. It may also be unimaginably wicked or ugly trait and so our *ultimate* duty is to stamp it out of existence, but we do have, at first sight, a duty to respect it. Greatness should be preserved as well as the great. It would be disrespectful to fill in the great Mariana trench, to display the Mona Lisa in an unflattering light, to slander a man with a great reputation, to disobey the ruling of a great magistrate (the disrespect is to his authority, not to his person), to remix the song of a great musician or to cheat against a great athlete. Those virtues are great-making in their context and to disrespect them would be to morally ignore the greatness of the thing.

The general way to respect greatness is to preserve it. Preserving greatness does not always cash out as preserving the thing which is great, nor as preserving those features which make the thing great. I can imagine a case where a man is great but is at risk of losing his great status for some course of action he intends. In this case it may be the right course of action to slay him before he falls from greatness; though I suspect that this duty would be overridden by a moral prohibition on murder; then again, if his fall would be very great, he could be better off dead than disgraced. As I will explain later, it would not be right to frustrate his plans by any other means, for a great man's will should be respected.

4.4.2 Preservation of Existence

One of the ways in which we respect any thing is to strive to ensure that its existence has the appropriate span. For most things this is simply case of indefinite preservation, however certain things are "meant to" last for a limited time only, to run their course and then expire. This "meant to" is a matter of appropriateness as I discussed earlier. It usually applies to things in nature such as tides and seasons and other things whose essence is in their transience. Glaciers and most sculptures might very well last forever and it would not be inappropriate for them to do so. We ought to prevent them from perishing if they are great, and the duty on us to do so is stronger when the object is greater. This is why it is more of a tragedy when a great person, such as Princess Diana, dies young than when a meaner person dies, such as a hooligan who got himself knifed in a bar fight. It would be more of a travesty if one of van Gogh's *Sunflower*s were slashed than if an inferior painting were victim to slashing. The reason it is worse for Princess Diana or Sunflowers to expire is that they are so great. Something of much value has been lost to world when they are lost, and valuable things are things which we are obliged to protect and preserve. People campaign to save the whales more enthusiastically than they do to save the wild salmon because whales are greater animals than those untamed (and delicious) fish.

When it comes to men, the lives of greater men are worth more than the lives of lesser men. This follows from greater men being worth more than lesser men. Since we are beholden to preserve value in the world, we ought to put the lives of greater men ahead of the lives of lesser men. This duty is not absolute. All other things being equal, if a person finds himself in a situation where he must choose between saving the life of a great man and the life of a mediocre man, he should choose to rescue the greater man. But things are very rarely equal. If the lesser man would suffer much more pain than the greater man and his death would cause much more sadness in the world than the death of the greater man, then it would be right to save the lesser man at the expense of the greater one. If both Kim Jong-il and a little matchgirl were bitten by a cantankerous viper and you had only one dose of antidote, it would surely be the right thing to let Kim Jong-il die and to save the matchgirl. That is because Kim Jong-il's evilness far outweighs his greatness and it would be right to allow such evil to pass from this world as soon as possible. If had I pledged to save the lesser man or were under some special obligation to him (such as if he were your spouse), then it may be incumbent on you to choose the life of the lesser ever the life of the greater person. The point is that the greatness of a person counts for something when it comes to weighing lives, and, in some cases, but not all, greatness may be the determining factor.

4.4.3 A Great Death and Greatness

How does the great man die? Sadly, it could be in a wretched way such as from a bee sting, or by slipping in the shower. On the other hand it could be as a martyr on a cross, or surrounded by friends while sipping hemlock, or while holding the pass. The important thing about the death of a great man is that it can offer an opportunity for him to sacrifice his life to a cause greater than his life, such as to philosophy, Spartan courage or to the (moral) salvation of mankind. He can even offer up his life to even more greatness, for life is a precious thing, and so decisions of life and death are important ones which can make for great deeds, a great reputation or solidify a virtue. Dying for love means so much more than merely snivelling over it. A man who dies for love can become the thing

of legends, but all the weeper becomes is wet of face and puffy of eye. Then we must ask whether the life of very great man is not greater than any of these things and should not be sacrificed for them. A further question is whether the lives of lesser men are expendable for the sake of the lives, will or greatness of superior men.

Shaftesbury (Anthony, 1900, p. 262) asks us to contemplate how we die. “To die the death—of what? A dog? A hog or sheep? No, but of a man.” He becomes quite enthusiastic in his style, which resembles that of the Stoic philosophers such as Aurelius and Epictetus. Shaftesbury continues in a ramble of suggestions of ways of dying, all in question form. His catalogue of ways of dying becomes very long. “To die at tea-time or over brunch? To die from a bee’s sting or in a dungeon? Whose dungeon? Whose rose garden? Is the tea served with crumpets?” etc. He eventually concludes with the suggestion that it is best to die a macho death, fighting for a cause you believe in—probably with swords. Such a death is the most noble. His reason for this is because such a death is a death a person should rationally choose—in other words, it is noble and greater to die on one’s own terms. And who would not want to die the death of a hero?

I doubt that a good working sliderule of axiology has been invented, so it is hard to specify how much value the existence of a great thing counts for when weighed against its greatness. But it seems that terminating the former in a suitable way can enhance the latter. The end of a great thing is usually very meaningful. This could be the end of a great war, the destruction of a great library or the death of a great man. The significance of these ending may explain why martyrdom, tragic heroes and peace treaties are often counted as great kinds. When Octavius Caesar hears of Mark Antony’s death he is disappointed that it did not have a greater effect, he seems saddened that his rival’s death brought no more greatness by its significance to an already great man:

The breaking of so great a thing should make

A greater crack. The rivèd world

Should have shook lions into civil streets,

And citizens to their dens.

(Antony and Cleopatra, V. i. 14–17)

4.5 More to the Greater

The greater man should be given more goods than the lesser man. This is a way of respecting the greater man. What makes him a human is his animality, sociability and personhood. We respect these things by giving weight to their ends and striving to preserve and promote their goods (as discussed above in the section on preserving greatness). Animals aim to eat, reproduce and avoid pain. The great man, as an animal, should be given sumptuous treats, raunchy sex and other things which provide him with ease and pleasure. Socially, humans have roles such as sportsman, minister or philosopher and so to respect these we should promote the aims of those roles in a great man. The reputation of a human is a social good which should be preserved and promoted. Persons do have goods such as intelligence, dignity and creativity which ought to be respected.

Because the great man deserves more respect, he has a greater right to that which respect of his humanness involves. He has a stronger right to having his dignity preserved. Respect for his reputation gives him an elevated right to receive public honours such as having his statue erected or receiving the key to the city. He has a stronger right to the human rights of sustenance, reproduction, comfort and life which are owed to every man. His preference also deserves more respect than that of lesser men. It is respectful to pay a man the goods naturally owing to him. It is *more* respectful to more strongly honour his right to those goods. Since these are goods, it is a sign

of still greater respect to provide him with yet more of these, even to excess. Since the great man warrants more respect, he merits more goods.

4.6 Virtue

Since, in this chapter, I have dealt with matters of obligation, respect and merit surrounding greatness, plus a few implicit forays into matters of consequentialism, it would be appropriate to complete the chapter by discussing matters of virtue. Virtue ethics, for goodness in people, aims to show that a person is good or evil (only) according their character traits. Those traits which make a person good are called virtues and those which make a person evil are called vices. Greatness has a similar structure to virtue ethics, in that features of a person are what make them great or wretched. For greatness, however, the great-making virtues extend much further than character traits, though character traits are included amongst the great-making virtues.

Until now I have leaned towards the view that any feature of a thing which can count as good for that thing will also count for it being great. Now is the time to interrogate that view. When we consider the case of men, we find that some features of greatness, or great-making qualities, make a person great for different reasons to that they make a person good or make him into a hero. Forthcoming I shall examine certain qualities of men, such as courage and generosity, and show how they can make a man good and how they can make a man great and how they do so in a very different, and sometimes conflicting, way. Furthermore, I examine how they make for heroes as another example of a higher-order virtue, with the purpose of highlighting the structure in question. This puts greatness in its own axiological genus, instead of being some measure of all the other categories of goods which (moral) *good* is. The genus, however, has a rather muddied gene pool. Not only does courage, for example, make a person great, but it also makes a person good. However, the reasons certain good-making qualities happen to make a person great does not carry through as the reason why goodness itself makes a person great.

The turn we take here certainly complicates matters, though whether it serves undermine or to enrich a theory of greatness is one which remains to be seen. My inclination to have greatness as inclusive of any good for a type of thing is because it seems that every good for a type of thing can make it great. This strongly points in the direction of greatness being somehow constructed of goods or values in general. When it comes to men, for example, people will cite any number of reasons for a man to be great. Some will say he is a great man because he is successful in business (for example, Donald Trump), or that he is great because he is so wise and holds so strong to his convictions (such as the Dalai Lama), or that he is wealthy or powerful or artistic, divine, enduring, endearing, strong-willed, independent, extraordinary, kind, heroic, fast, accomplished, significant, educated, famous and so on. There is such a vast array of supposed bearers for greatness in men and I see no overwhelming reasons to exclude them. The common man has no less authority to call this person great or small as does a philosopher; after all, common men are the people who conceived the notion of greatness and they retain some rights of parenthood. Naturally, the vulgar thinkers and their concepts are open to scrutiny, and, under scrutiny we have discovered that they tend to muddle up their concepts and choose their words too hastily; such is the way of the neglectful parent. For example, they often neglect to qualify from which aspect a thing is great, so when, now they call a man great then, later, a philosopher comes to ask “Do you mean that he is a great man or a great satirist or that he did some great deeds?”, the man can, with the lens of reason that the philosopher has given to him, discern exactly what he means, and sometimes he will stick stubbornly to his judgement that the man is great as a man; such is the way of the critical philosopher and the caring nanny. We have also discovered that there are great-breaking characteristics, so that Hitler would have been counted as great for his exceptional strength of resolve and his awesome charisma and influence, were he not so deficient in moral goodness.

In order to illustrate how a property can produce greatness in a manner unlike that of any other value, the following is an exploration into certain character traits with a focus on how they

make a person morally good, how they make a person great and how they make a person heroic. The rationale behind showing how certain traits make a person heroic is that it shows the richness of this difference. For the difference in how something makes a person good and how it makes a person great can be seen in other second-order characteristics. The second-order characteristics include happiness, wickedness, meaningfulness and so on.

Just to remind the reader, the point of this section is to solidify the possibility, in the reader's mind, that greatness is a quality which is a qualitatively distinct from any other value. It is not merely a summary of something's qualities and their respective magnitudes. I think the same applies to goodness, by the by. If we were to take the degrees of a person's morally relevant traits multiplied by their moral weight (which would be negative if the trait were immoral) and then sum them, a positive sum would indicate that the person is "good" and a negative result would indicate that they were "evil", but this is not all there is to being good. The "something more" comes in the connection as to *why* some trait contributes or detracts from goodness. Without that, to be good, or to be great for that matter, is just derivative of certain traits such that to say that something is good or great is a handy summary of their qualities, with a certain focus. Handy summaries include GDPs for countries, statistical results for a census and half-lives for isotopes. Part of *understanding* greatness or goodness or heroism involves understanding why these virtues connect to those component virtues or vices which make for them.

When I undertook the following exercise I discovered that it had happy consequences for this project. In distinguishing how the virtues worked to make a man great, good and heroic, a clearer view of the nature of greatness was revealed. It was as though I had picked away at the threads of a cloth in order to separate them, and in separating them I discovered that I could see between the weave of the cloth to a pattern which was previously concealed. It was as though I had no idea of the construction of a woven Persian carpet, but had now separated the weft threads, with some pressure, to discover row upon row of warp threads suddenly revealed. As the reader

continues, I do hope that a pattern emerges for him too. The picture will not be clear—just to know that there are warp threads is not to know the whole craft of carpet making. It will take until the end of the project before we can start to form a passable theory of greatness. Though, for now, I hope it interests the reader to see how that which makes a person virtuous can make him wretched, and that which makes him wicked can make him great. For the sake of highlighting nuances in these hidden workings, we will also look at what character traits make or break a hero.

4.6.1 Courage

Courage is good-making because it enables a person to do the right thing despite his fear. It allows a moral agent to overcome expedience when the prudential course of action is much easier and much less dangerous than the rightful course. A person needs courage to blow the whistle on corruption, to leap into the freezing lake to save a life and to defend the innocent from the wickedness of others.

Courage is a heroic virtue because it motivates the hero to perform dangerous deeds, which are often instrumental for the hero's glory. Courage is also necessary for the heroic virtue of recklessness. The perfect hero does not hesitate in the face of danger, though he may postpone action order to devise a plan. A hero needs to knowingly put himself in peril while going above and beyond the call of duty—this is the essence of heroism, for the knowledge of danger comes with fear—fear to be overcome. He must enter danger wilfully, knowledgably and for the sake of the task at hand. Without courage this would not be possible.

Courage makes a man greater for it allows him to treat dangers as though they are trifling and beneath him. The great man can show that he has the conviction and strength of will to overcome that which would dissuade most men. The great man does not completely disregard his own well-being: it is just that he aims at goals which are grander than keeping himself safe. An overriding concern with comforts is a trait which is found in both the pampered and the destitute. A

courageous man places less value on his life and comforts than he does on his dignity, his friendships and his works. Courage also enables the great man to perform great deeds because sometimes a deed is great because of the risk it has for the doer. Perhaps this is why great men are often successful generals, wealthy business entrepreneurs and lauded presidents—one rarely just stumbles into these positions: they are *earned*. It takes guts to get into those positions and then, to make a *success* of oneself as a general, entrepreneur and president it takes still more guts. Aside from its immediate great-making capacity, courage has an indirect power to facilitate greatness because it enables a man to do great deeds, which realise great accomplishments which, in turn make him great.

4.6.2 Charity

The charitable person is morally good because he will probably improve the well-being of others, as well as respect their wishes by satisfying their desires for comfort, health, food, wealth, safety and so on. The world is a happier place when people are charitable because charity alleviates suffering. The charitable person gives from his own resources so that he suffers nobly (to some degree) in order to aid others. All these things make charity a virtuous character trait to have.

Charity is not a heroic virtue. Whether a person is charitable or miserly makes no difference to whether he is a hero.

Charity contributes towards greatness because a charitable act establishes the superiority of the giver over the receiver. More importantly, the giving of charity is an expression of disregard for wealth and demonstrates a man's dominance over himself. The charitable man says "I have less of a need for this stuff which you count as so important." Because a man is less needy, a man is more independent and therefore more great. In a sense, when giving charity, the giver is squandering his money because he gets nothing in return. An act of charity involves overcoming prudence because it is one man's desire to help another at his own expense and with no expectation of recompense.

This means that his will is not drawn this way or that by a lodestone of prudential considerations—his will is free and determine only by him. He puts his desire to give away his money ahead of his need for money. When charity turns into largess then a man becomes even greater because his prudence lessens and his mastery over his will increases.

4.6.3 Mercy

Mercy is leniency when it is one's *right* to either make or allow another to suffer *and* when it is within one's *power* to cause or permit such suffering. It is questionable whether a Viking raider acts mercifully when he spares a man's life since he has no right to take it in the first place, but a judge who reduces a sentence is merciful, as is a man who spares the life of an assassin sent to kill him; so too is a person who performs an act of justified, though not obligatory, euthanasia. A merciful person is morally praiseworthy because he reduces the amount of suffering in the world even when he is not obliged to. Merciful people are understandably praised for their supererogatory acts of goodness. When a person would be expected to have a strong antipathy towards another, and then he treats the other mercifully, then he is especially praiseworthy.

Mercy is a heroic quality because merciful acts add an additional layer of conquest. When a man spares his enemy's life he has accrued an extra victory—a victory over his own inclination to assert his power. Mercy is also an additional strike against one's enemy, for it leaves him to suffer the humiliation of being the inferior combatant. A hero can be seen as a champion for a morally good cause. We can generalise his cause as goodness, and so a hero achieves an end whenever he realises the good. Since a man's passions are often a strong motivator against what is good and right, it takes a great strength of will to overcome one's passions. So this overcoming of the enemy within oneself (an obstacle) makes a man a hero.

Mercy is great-making because an act of mercy shows self-control, power and an overcoming of morality. As in the case of heroism, self-control is mastery over oneself despite one's

passions. The power a merciful man has is over he to whom he is merciful, and the great man chooses not to exercise his power even though it is within his right to do so. Although he has not cancelled his right to bring suffering on another, he has not exploited it either. I saw an episode of *Oprah* where she made left shoes available to members of her audience for free. Almost every one of the audience members took a free left shoe, even though there was nothing useful they could do with it. It was freely available, it was their right to take the shoe and therefore they exercised their right. Surely this kind of behaviour is rather petty, despicable and rapacious. A great man would not have taken the free left shoe. A great man does not feel compelled to exercise his moral right to cause suffering either. A great man does things on his own terms and is not compelled by anything but himself. At the end of the show, Oprah completed the pairs with the right shoe. There was much spontaneous rejoicing when this happened. There is often much spontaneous rejoicing on that show. I highly recommend it.

4.6.4 Cruelty

Cruelty is a moral vice. A person who is cruel causes pain for others both easily and joyfully. This pain does not need to be unjustified in order for a person to be cruel. A torturer who tortures on those who deserve it may or may not be cruel, depending on how he feels when he causes others to suffer. If he delights in it, he is cruel, if he does so with a reluctant spirit but goes through with it because it is the right thing to do, then he is not cruel. Cruelty is morally vicious because it inclines a person to hurt others even when it is unjustified, and because it prevents mercy in cases when causing pain is permissible yet not obligatory, and because a cruel person regards the pain of others in the wrong way. We ought to count the pain of others as a terrible thing, both intellectually and emotionally. Intellectually we should count it as having a disvalue and emotionally we should be horrified by pain and feel pity towards those who are in pain.

Cruelty is a minor heroic virtue. Villains and tyrants are cruel whereas heroes are champions of the good. There is, however, a grey area when it comes to cruelty and heroism. When a hero vanquishes his nemesis and that nemesis is both wretched and hated by all, it is not unheroic for a hero to twist the knife, so to speak, and to feel immensely satisfied. Perhaps the satisfaction comes from the knowledge that justice is being done. Overall, however, I do not think that cruelty has much weight as a heroic virtue or vice. Heroes are generally the good guys, but a dark hero is a hero nonetheless and it is quite possible that a dark hero acts cruelly to achieve a positive end.

Being cruel does not make a man great. A man may be both great and cruel, and many are, however their cruelty is not a foundation for their greatness. A great man may be indifferent to pain, but should not delight in it. When the young Epictetus was a slave his master twisted his leg to punish him. But Epictetus did not cry out in pain. He simply said "if you carry on it will break," and then it broke. That kind of fortitude and indifference to pain is admirable. There is no reason, in that case, to think that Epictetus's attitude was morally good, though it certainly was admirable. A great man is indifferent to his pain and he may be indifferent to the pain of others. The great man might be *callous*, in that he is indifferent to pain because he concerns himself with more important things than pleasure and pain, but he should not be cruel. A great man who punishes another man with horrible tortures and does so without any self-disgust or remorse is still a great man, so long as he tortures for the sake of punishment or, even better, for revenge. A cruel person would torture for sake of causing pain and delight in it. But, as we can see in the case of punishment and revenge, there are matters far nobler than pleasure and pain which, in my opinion, are base values, fitting the concerns of the lower animals.

4.6.5 Kindness

The well-being of others carries weight in the mind of the kind person, who aims to protect and promote this good. The kind person hates for others to suffer. Kindness is a moral virtue

because he who is kind concerns himself with moral goods such as happiness, comfort and freedom from pain. A person who is kind will act in such a way as to increase the amount of pleasure in the world and decrease the amount of pain—which is quite in line with those consequentialists who hold pleasure as a value. A person who is kind will often have the appropriate moral feelings when considering a situation with a moral character. For example, a kind person would be horrified to see a cat set ablaze, a slave beaten or a child's ice-cream tumble off its cone onto the asphalt. Furthermore, a kind person would be inclined to act in such a way as to mitigate the circumstances—such as by dowsing or euthanizing the cat, comforting or rescuing the slave, or recovering or replacing the ice-cream. These will usually be the morally correct acts.

Kindness does not stand alone as a heroic virtue, though when coupled with courage it often accounts for the difference between a hero and a villain. Certain heroic acts might be motivated by kindness, such as the rescuing of a slave or the liberation of a kingdom from a despot, but the kindness alone does not make the hero because these outcomes can be obtained through devious means. Since heroes are usually powerful men, kindness is a sign of their self-overcoming because with great power it is easy to become a cruel and selfish bully, but a person who is a bully is generally not kind. Heroes have the strength to overcome their self-serving inclinations or, even better, they never had such inclination to begin with.

Kindness is a great-making virtue only when it is directed towards people who are less than great. The reason for this is that kindness is condescending. When a man is kind to another, he acknowledges the other's pain, suffering and pleasure as something which is very important to that man. But those men who treat their own pain and pleasure as relatively important on the scale of goods are not men who are headed for greatness. A great man would put accomplishments, reputation, dignity, and so on above the brutish goods of pleasure and pain. Pleasure and pain count as relatively significant values to non-persons, and so are fitting for beasts. But men, who are greater creatures because they are persons and who might become great men by becoming greater persons,

prioritise the noble virtues over the brutish ones. When a man is kind to another it is condescending because the message of kindness is "I see you take you pleasure and pain as very important to you, let me affirm your values in your case, and I shall also take them as important to you." The appropriate action to follow from the sentiment is to promote pleasure and prevent pain. Therefore an act of kindness affirms the superiority of the kind person over the recipient of kindness. We see this as a great making virtue in moral saints such as Jesus and Mother Theresa. Both these people were made great and could maintain their greatness through being kind. Jesus was kind to all humans and he viewed his suffering as insignificant compared to the importance of the virtue of sacrifice and the state of purity which he could attain through sacrifice. Mother Theresa displayed kindness to thousands of indigents for which she deserves only praise. However, imagine she had such kindness towards Nelson Mandela in his prison—would we not think it was a little condescending? This is not to say that Mother Theresa could not have rightly acted in Mandela's best interest by bringing him gingersnaps, liberation or comfort—but such things should not have been done out of kindness; instead they should be done only out of respect for Mandela as a great man.

To briefly digress on the topic of kindness, kindness ought not to be directed towards great men. When kindness is directed towards great men it comes too close to pity, which is an insult to a great person. The reason for this is that kindness, in order to count as feature of character, must be motivated by the appropriate emotion in order to distinguish kindness from merely acting out of a duty to relieve suffering in others. That emotion is pity, which should not be directed towards great men for it insinuates that the great man's pain or pleasure means much to him. Happiness is a good and there is no reason why it should be denied a great man, but others should promote the happiness of great men out of respect or as a reward for their greatness, not from sympathy or pity.

4.6.6 Loyalty

Loyalty is a moral virtue because it involves keeping special obligations we have. Loyalty does not have much to do with making the world a happier place, and it may even prevent the world from being a harmonious place, but to be loyal is to seek the good of those to whom one is beholden to seek the good for, especially when that good is threatened by rivals. When a person has the virtue of loyalty they cheerfully and willingly defend, promote or avenge the goods, rights, reputation and dignity of those to whom they are loyal. The lucky objects of loyalty include one's lord, country, church, corporation and god—in which case the obligation is often explicitly affirmed in oaths, pledges, hymns and conditions of employment. One ought to be loyal to one's friends and family, in which case the obligation is usually tacit.

Loyalty is an important virtue for heroes, since many heroes are national heroes in that they defend or promote a community. Andre Popa, Zapatista, Perseus, Winston Churchill and Luke Skywalker count amongst national heroes. Their loyalty to some or other group is what motivates their courageous actions. Loyalty is a virtue for those heroes such as Robin Hood or Batman who fight for an *ideal* such as the alleviation of poverty or for justice. Loyalty counts as a heroic virtue in those cases because it evinces a lack of expedience. Expedience is a destructive vice for a hero because it is essential to heroism that the hero acts for the good of something other than himself. If he were expedient then it would be difficult to distinguish the hero from either the villain or the bully. Note that the hero does not need to act for the good of something which is morally good: no one can say which of the Greeks or the Trojans were in the right, but no one can deny that both sides produced heroes. Furthermore, a hero can ally himself with a cause which is evil, and thereby allow for evil Nazi heroes. Note that this heroism is of the classical sort, not the new-fangled moral heroism. The moralism of these times makes it unfashionable to laud any good of anybody who doesn't warrant moral approval.

Loyalty might be a great making virtue, depending on the object of a man's loyalty and depending on the origin of the loyalty. When a person is loyal to something he attests to its value. There is a danger that when a great man is loyal to a lesser man, as is often the case when men are loyal to leaders of state, that loyalty will cause a man to stray from greatness. He might compromise his independence (though not necessarily his integrity) for an ignoble cause—such as to protect a little man from just revenge or to enter into a petty squabble. When a person is loyal to a man or a community which is greater than himself (let us assume that greatness between kinds is commensurable), then such loyalty can ennoble a person. Such loyalty contributes towards greatness in martyrs, saints and war heroes. Despite this contribution, I feel that the degree of deference and compromise of independence in the loyal man outweighs the admirability of being loyal, even if it is to someone or something that is great, unless that person or thing is very great indeed. Perhaps devotion to a real god or to a sublime ideal could be admirable.

There is, however, an opportunity for greatness when a man explicitly and freely pledges loyalty to something great because this opens up chances for a man to manifest integrity. The man who pledges loyalty may be lucky enough find himself in circumstances which test his word, and thereby might reveal the lengths he would go through in order to uphold it. This is why the Forty-Seven Ronin are considered to be great. A court official, named Kira Yoshinaka, gravely insulted the honour and reputation of Asano Takumi-no-Kami Naganori, a young Daimyo. Asano lost his temper and rightly struck out at Kira, barely wounding him before guards separated the two. The incident took place in Edo castle—the equivalent of a parliament—where violence was forbidden. For his crime, Asano was ordered to commit seppuku, which is a ritual suicide. Asano honourably obeyed the order. At his death, his vassals lost their samurai status and became ronin, or masterless warriors. Forty-seven of these ronin decided to avenge their master by killing Kira Yoshinaka. They knew that this would count as murder and they would be sentenced to death. The forty-seven waited a year and then they raided Kira's mansion, killed him, and thereby avenged their master.

The ronin then turned themselves into the authorities. They were ordered to commit sepukku, which they did on the fourth day of February 1703 A.D. For their loyalty, the forty-seven ronin are renowned as great men. As an interesting aside on the matter of luck, the samurai scholar Yamamoto Tsunetomo criticises the forty-seven for waiting a year because they risked Kira dying from disease or other misfortune before they could enact their revenge. (Tsunetomo, 1979, p. 26)

5. *Theories of Greatness*

During time I have spent on this project, I would often be accosted at parties with the usual conversation opener: "What do you do?" If my mood was not sarcastic, the lucky questioner would receive an honest reply: that I was working on a dissertation about greatness in people. Had I only chosen to explore the question of the metaphysical implications on content resulting from the suggested ontological categories in Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*, then the questioning would have stopped there and then. But, alas, my interrogator would typically respond by asking me what the great man is. Such an indecent question! My usual response would be to suggest they have another drink and thereafter it wouldn't matter. You, on the other hand, my dear reader, have endured my rambling thus far and so you *do* deserve an answer...as well as a drink.

This chapter attempts to give an elegant and substantive answer to the question "what makes a man great?" In it, I critically examine some ostensibly viable theories of greatness for men, all of which fail—but some fail less badly than the others do. The aim of these theories is to stitch together, with one thread, the diverse elements which account for and surround greatness. When this chapter begins to search for a theory it begins with a feasibility study as to whether an elegant and unifying theory of greatness in people is possible. The main concern is that greatness is essentially too pluralistic and multifarious for a terse and elegant theory of greatness, such that the best we can hope for is a heterogeneous *set* of features of greatness. Furthermore, a good theory of greatness should also explain the structure of greatness—why greatness is rare, why it ought to be admired, why it has moral import and so on. In my examination, some of the structural aspects are obvious and sometimes it is futile to pursue them because the theory falls apart too quickly for it to be worthwhile—further analysis would be like flogging a dead horse, so to speak.

There were two texts which hinted to me about theories of greatness and which inspired a sense of *viability* for theories which were already half-formed in my mind. The first of these texts is Robert Nozick's *The Examined Life* which is a philosophically unusual book. At first reading it seems completely wacky—Nozick uses familiar terms in esoteric fashions, and he has unorthodox understandings of normal philosophical terms such as "value"; the book has diagrams of the dimensions of a man's life and contains startlingly wishy-washy language such as "the peace that passeth understanding" and involves an axis of "light" and "dark" values. Then I read it a second and third time and found that Nozick has a very interesting insight into life and values and that the primary value which he propounded, which he calls "reality", is structurally very similar to greatness and his intuition as to when it manifests in men is very close to our intuitions on where greatness manifests in men.

The second text is an article which is remarkably pedestrian in both its content and its origin. It was written by a couple of businessmen and appeared in the *Journal of Accounting*. Sometimes we philosophers need exposure to common sense intuitions of intelligent non-philosophers. I recall reading Thomas Reid's *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* with a group of fellow philosophers. We all burst into exalted laughter which came from sheer cognitive delight when we read how we perceive the world (Reid, 1997, 6.20), because it was in a way that the common man would quickly understand and it aroused such nostalgia in us for the time before we were philosophers. "He is right!" We all shouted, "We knew this before we studied philosophy, and we forgot it since!" In the accountants' article, called *The Metrics of Greatness*, Shamis and Nisberg simply list what makes for a great firm. Seeing a list of seven great-making characteristics for a company, a list both uncomplicated and without any philosophical arguments, brought me, briefly, to a state of clarity. In my contemplation of this I began to think what we really take greatness for in men, and it came down to goodness and excellence. Upon more probing these bearers needed to be rejected, but it was useful return to simple common sense and casual thought. This chapter looks at

both moral goodness and perfectionism as the sole bearers of greatness for men. It also looks at Nozick's notion of reality as a theory of greatness. Further contemplation on this topic brought me to what I consider the most promising theory of greatness I have, which is what I call the theory of transcendence of type for greatness.

5.1 Unifying Diversity in Theories

The purpose of a theory, in both philosophy and science, is to *unify*. A scientific theory unifies phenomena under concepts, and a philosophical one unifies concepts under still more concepts. When it comes to greatness in people there is a serious question as to whether an elegant unifying theory is possible.

There are a variety of factors which can make something great. Shamis and Nisberg, who are both business executives, write on what makes a great firm. Those factors are philanthropy, reputation, the longevity of the firm, diversity of the people in the firm, employee-centredness, work quality and creativity. Some of these, such as philanthropy and employee-centeredness make a firm great because they make a firm a more moral entity. Philanthropy and creativity, for example, were chosen because they make a firm wealthier in the long run. But these authors gave no instrumental reason as to why the quality of a business's work should make it great. I suspect that this is either because readers of the *Journal of Accountancy* are expected to immediately infer that quality cashes out as cash, or because the work is the essence of the business so a good quality of work would contribute to the firm's arête. I optimistically favour the latter explanation. (Shamis & Nisberg, 2006)

5.1.1 Diversity as a Virtue for Greatness

There is probably value in having a diversity of values which comes from the *diversity* and not from the sum of the values which account for the diversity. For example, Shamis and Nisberg claim that philanthropy is a great-making feature of a firm.(Shamis & Nisberg, 2006, p. 32) It

certainly is morally good to be philanthropic, and that may be where some of the greatness comes from. As I pondered philanthropy for a firm I imagined two firms, one being philanthropic and the other not and with everything else being equal. To my mind, the one firm seemed greater than the other. However, the degree of additional greatness seemed too much to be simply put down to the value of philanthropy itself. The value of morality for firms doesn't seem to have that much weight to me when contributing to greatness. Of course, it is instrumentally important for a firm to be moral for the society in which it has its business, but firms just aren't the kind of organisation for which morality forms a significant part of their being. Even if the reader disagrees with me on that point, I am sure that he too will find the difference in greatness between the two firms (one philanthropic and the other not) to be disproportionate to the value of philanthropy for firms.

So what could account for this disparity? As I deliberated over the problem I came to two little epiphanies as to what may account for the greatness here—diversity and transcendence.

The first of these little epiphanies is the smaller of the two. It is that there is greatness in having a diversity of values. The second epiphany is that greatness is a transcendence of type. I will only explain the second epiphany at the end of this chapter because it is the most interesting theory and because, so I have been told, it is good practice, when writing, to keep the reader in suspense for as long as possible.

There are certain things for which diversity obviously makes them great. Examples of these things include stamp collections and ecosystems. A stamp collection is all the better for having a diverse selection of stamps from various countries, time periods and so on. An ecosystem is greater (though not necessarily healthier) for having a larger biodiversity of species. Let us call diversity in these cases a first order great-making property.

Diversity as a second order great-making property is a diversity of great-making properties, or, of goods. A diversity of great-making properties, or even of goods, counts as a great-making property even in things for which diversity is not a first order great-making property. To clarify: the stamp collection has stamps from many countries. This diversity of geography makes the collection great. This diversity is a first order great-making virtue for the collection. But the collection also has stamps from diverse times that make it great. Now, for having *two* great-making properties (a diversity *within* geography and history), the collection is made even greater. The latter greatness comes from the second order great-maker, which is diversity.

Much work is done by the firm having a positive element unlike the other elements. This diversity counts by itself, not just because the extra elements have value of their own. The one firm is better rounded than the other. The philanthropic firm has a broader range of interest than the other, and this makes it great. Philanthropy is neither the aim, nor the *raison d'être*, nor the essence of a firm. As to the aim of a firm, firms aim at doing their business e.g. selling risk, building ships or mining gold. The raison d'être of firms—why they come into existence—is usually in order to profit their shareholders by increasing the market value of their shares and paying dividends. Philanthropy is not the essence of a firm, since a firm which is not philanthropic is not bad as a firm. However, philanthropy still improves a firm and part of the reason it does this is because it enriches the firm's existence. By being philanthropic the firm increases the number of values it has. Having a large number of values, aside from the magnitude of those values, is a second order great-making virtue which adds value and greatness to a thing.

We find that second order diversity also counts in people. René Descartes was a great philosopher. But he was also a great academic, for aside from philosophy he was a great mathematician and he was also very proficient in biology, physics, mathematic astronomy and geometric optics. The range of his academic interest made for some of his greatness as an academic and as a polymath. As great a man as this makes him, when we hear that Descartes was also a

military engineer and that he followed armies and wars across Europe in order to ply his trade, we cannot but increase our estimation of the man. Although he was neither a great engineer nor a great traveller, he is certainly improved for being more than merely a scholar. He is better rounded for it. Had only he also suffered a scar in a duel against the finest swordsman in Europe he would be greater still. Nicolaus Copernicus was also a polymath of note; however, he surpassed even Descartes in the diversity of his interests and the richness of his life. Copernicus had the honour of having his works scrutinised for heresy by the Church and he even oversaw the defences of a castle as it was besieged by the Teutonic Knights. In my opinion, Copernicus's contribution to our knowledge was not more significant than Descartes', although it is more popular; yet Copernicus is greater than Descartes because he had more diverse valuable aspects to his life.

Diversity is a great-making property which needs to be taken into account by a theory of greatness. Unfortunately, the more seriously we take diversity as a great-making value, the harder it becomes to stitch together the first-order values which account for the diversity and *which also, individually, account for the greatness*. What makes these first-order values diverse is exactly what makes it hard to stick them together—they are of very different kinds. Some are deeds, some are actions, some are relationships to other people or to concrete entities, some are physical characteristics, some are moral properties, and some are roles which the great person falls under. Bringing them under one umbrella is difficult because we need to find an umbrella which can cover these various ontological realms.

The theories which follow react differently to the problem of diversity. One of the reasons the theory of perfectionism for greatness fails is that it cannot account for this diversity. The theory that goodness is greatness does not have this problem, because the concept of moral goodness is such a broad brush anyway. We speak of morally good relationships, character traits, deeds, attitudes and persons anyway, so any problem we might have with diversity is just absorbed into the concept of moral goodness with a convenient wave of the hand which is almost globally accepted in

philosophy anyhow. Nozick's notion of reality for a theory of greatness very easily admits of this diversity: it is a core concept in his notion of degrees of value and reality. This is why the theory of reality has strong point of explaining the structure of greatness very well. The final theory of transcendence of type uses ontologically high-order concepts which are inclusive of types. As to be expected, a tactic of superinclusiveness happens at the expense of a theory's explanatory power.

5.2 Perfectionism

Perfectionism is the theoretical standpoint that humans ought to strive to perfect themselves. Certain features make us human and, depending on how these features are configured, an individual is more or less perfect. There are various possible versions of perfectionism which can vary according to which elements count towards perfection and how to establish their configuration and magnitude to determine what counts as perfect. Typically, these elements include creativity, intellect, the will-to-power, sociability, divinity and so on. The usual way for perfectionists to derive this list is to ask: "What makes us human?" It is not necessary for us to be zealous and narrow-theoried essentialists in order to answer this question, and for this discussion I am going to consider the answer to that question in a loose fashion which, I hope, will be acceptable to most readers. I will also take an openly pluralistic view of perfectionism. By "openly pluralistic" I mean that I treat perfectionism for humans as pluralistic in the sense that several characteristics contribute to a human being perfect, but I leave it open as to whether we can run a theoretic needle and thread through all these elements and group them all under some neat description such as "What makes a thing perfect is fulfilling its proper function." or "Use of the human intellect is the one and only (super)value which can make us perfect."

The theory that greatness is perfection is a very appealing one which comes easily and naturally to the mind when we contemplate greatness. Greatness, like perfection, is aspectual in that it needs to be qualified according to kind. Something is great or perfect *as a man* or *as a chimp*

or *as secateurs*. Furthermore, like for greatness, a different set of characteristics makes for perfection in one kind of thing than for another. Burrowing ability might make a mole-person better, and nest-building makes a weaverbird better, but neither of these things matter much for humans.

One more reason which inclines us to identify greatness with perfection is that as things become closer to being perfect they also become greater. This is the kind of relationship we would expect to see if perfection and greatness were identical. However, identity is not the only possible way to explain this kind of tracking. If we want to demonstrate identity we need to provide evidence that this tracking goes both ways such that an increase or decrease in greatness is proportionally matched by a change in perfection.

Regrettably, the two-way tracking does not obtain. Perfectionism is too narrow to be greatness because there are values which contribute toward a thing's greatness but which do not contribute towards it being perfect.

The character of perfectionism and that of greatness diverge in that the values of perfectionism are more intrinsic that that which we would like to allow for greatness. Before examining all the theories of greatness it would be presumptuous to claim that there really are externals which are great-making qualities. However, it does not seem uncharacteristic of greatness to have external values such as significance, wealth, fame and so on. On the other hand, perfectionism has a strong focus on the qualities which are intrinsic, essential, internal and insular. Perfectionism tends to look towards a man's character, faculties and ability. When I converse with myself on these matters, I use the term "formal qualities" to describe these qualities because they describe the *way in which a thing is*. Although these "formal qualities" are important to matters of greatness, they do not have an especially significant status.

The divergence of character between greatness and perfectionism is hardly a conclusive proof of their distinctness. The divergence of character could merely be a convenient difference in our angle of approach to the same thing. For example, “capital” and “assets” are really the same thing, but when we think of capital we focus on it from the point of view of it being resources, whereas when we think of assets we focus on it with emphasis on it being owned, but in both actuality and in thought, these things are the same. In order to show that the distinction between perfection and greatness is real, I shall presume to be presumptuous regarding the claim I cautioned against in the previous paragraph: I maintain that there are external qualities which contribute towards greatness and which do not contribute toward perfection.

Don Quixote de la Mancha was a brave and chivalrous man. He charged an army of wicked giants and strove to win the love of the fair Dulcinea del Toboso. The courage he exhibited in pursuing his goals as well as his dedication to forming and being a part of society both count towards his perfection. But these are not enough to make him great. Although his courage and dedication were real, his name, the giants and Dulcinea were all concoctions of his imagination. He invented his name, he imagined windmills as giants and Dulcinea was an illusion he constructed over the girl next door, Aldonza Lorenzo. In order to be great one must be in real danger and face real giants and win the heart of a real princess. Had Einstein merely sat in his armchair, invented the his special theory of relativity, and then kept his mouth shut and taken up trainspotting, he would be no less perfect for he would be no less intelligent, contemplative nor creative. But the Einstein who could have been is less great than the Einstein who was, because the Einstein who was brought knowledge to humanity, brought change to human history, won fame and earned kudos. Hence, there are facts about a thing which make for its greatness yet do not do contribute towards its perfection.

Individuality, uniqueness and originality count towards greatness in people, artworks and technology. What these things have in common is that they are *created*, though in the case of humans we are, to some degree, *self-created* in that we (as individuals) have a say in *how we are*

with respect to our character, moral status, achievements and so on. Great men are often eccentric. By “eccentric” I do not mean that they are weirdoes who wear top hats and drink their own urine. Great men are eccentric in the sense that they stand out from the norm. Standing out from the norm matters in making people great, at least when it comes to degrees of their great-making qualities. Yet perfectionism does not account for individuality and originality because perfectionism is only interested that which makes a thing member of its kind, not that which makes it stand apart from its kind. Perfectionism is conformist—it calls on you *to be the best that you can be* but only according to the ideal for your kind: *be the best human you be.* Greatness, on the hand, for certain things, applauds difference. Being the *greatest* human you can be might just involve deviating from humanity and overstepping the boundaries of your kind. I have more to say on this when I consider the possibility that *transcendence* is that which makes us great.

Although greatness and perfection are neither conceptually identical nor substantively identical, a perfect man would surely be a great man too. Furthermore, it is my hunch that any increase in perfection will result in an increase of greatness for a man. I think that both being perfect itself as well as those qualities which accounts for perfection contribute towards greatness. Perfection is also the property which breaks my intuition that great things are rare, for in an world where everyone is perfect or close to perfection, I find it hard to imagine that they would not be great. Although perfection and greatness are not identical, neither conceptually nor substantively, they are very close to each other, such that a point for perfection in a man counts towards his greatness too.

5.3 Goodness

In the earlier chapter on the meaning of greatness we looked at whether greatness and goodness are the same. The focus and purpose of that discussion was to show the conceptual distinctness of the two. The main reasons we had to think that they were identical were semantic:

"good" is often used as a synonym for "great", both terms can both be qualified by an aspect and "great" is used as a superlative or emphatic form of "good". It is not a mistake to use the term like that, for it is often rightly understood to be that. By saying "good" we sometimes *do* mean "great" and the reverse is also true. But upon reflection we discovered that such talk is either loose, or idiomatic, or mistaken. The term "good" in that discussion was used in general, and not used specifically in the moral sense. Now the time has come in our discourse to examine whether moral goodness and greatness are substantively the same. There is nautical convention for a ship to raise a blue peter before it sets sail, and so I will also nail my colours to the mast before I embark on the discussion: I wholly reject the theory that, in general, greatness and moral goodness are the same for people. I will take it that the *conceptual* difference between goodness and greatness has successfully been demonstrated earlier in this paper, therefore the theory of goodnesss-as-greatness which I examine here is that moral goodness is the sole bearer of greatness for humans.

Since I speak of moral goodness here, the theory that moral goodness is greatness really only applies to things which can have a moral status. It would be underhand of me to argue that greatness cannot be moral goodness because Mount Everest is a great mountain but mountains cannot have a moral status therefore greatness is not goodness. It is another matter whether penicillin is a great medicine because, so it happens, penicillin is morally good in an instrumental way which is a sort of moral status. The Russian Civil War was a morally atrocious event, at least for the loss of lives which comprised it, but the event itself did not have any agency such as that found in a person. Goodness for medicines and political events are not good in all the ways a person can be morally good. So I specifically focus on the identification of moral goodness with the greatness we find in people. As for the greatness of non-persons and non-humans, the theory of goodness for greatness may or may not apply and even if it doesn't apply that should not discount it from being taken seriously in the matter of greatness is people.

To take this theory seriously, it helps to see that goodness can come very close to accounting for all the greatness in certain kinds of things. Moral goodness, for example, might be all that makes for the greatness of a person as a philanthropist. My reservation regarding great philanthropy making for a great person, are the hypothetical cases of the philanthropist who is wrongly benevolent to humans at the expense of animals or who is wrongly benevolent at the expense of dignity. In the first case he is a great philanthropist, but not a good person; and in the second case he is a great philanthropist and maybe not a good person and certainly not a great person. Moral goodness is almost all that makes a great saint. The additional great-making quality for saints is their having of more persuasive powers of advocacy with the divine; but the reader might comfortably disagree on that point.

Of course, "good" and "great" are not quite synonyms. "Great" is a more emphatic term and if we take goodness and greatness to be one and the same, it would be only reasonable to assume the greatness is a high degree of goodness. With the matter of degree on the side, the theory maintains that greatness in men and moral goodness in men are made of the same stuff such that a man who is great is made great by his being morally good and that is the *only* way in which he can be great. Overall, I think that the matter of grammatical emphasis is a trifling one, not worth dealing with.

I have three arguments against the claim that moral goodness is the sole provider of greatness in men. The first is that there are great-making qualities which are morally neutral, the second is that being exceedingly good can diminish greatness, and the third is that evil can make for greatness.

5.3.2 Amoral Virtues of Greatness

When people say that a man will not be remembered for his altruism they usually mean that he was a right bastard. Although Roald Amundsen is not remembered for his altruism, it is *not*

because he was a right bastard—he just wasn't much of an altruist. Roald Amundsen is remembered for being the leader of the first party to reach the South Pole in 1912 and then for traversing the Northwest Passage. He also happened to be a moral fellow who was dutiful to his parents and his king, as were many Norwegians at the time. He even set off on acts of supererogatory goodness, for he undertook daring rescue missions. However, the daring of those missions and their unhappy ends make them more memorable than their virtuous goals. All of exploring uncharted territory, enduring hardships and succeeding on these difficult missions which he set for himself, are not particularly moral things. They are not *im*moral things either. But they *are* both admirable and inspirational and they make for greatness, at least they do in Amundsen's case.

If morality were the only fact in making a man great, then so many of Amundsen's adventures would count for nothing towards his greatness. His ingenuity, forbearance, endurance and wilfulness would count nothing for his greatness. Let us reconstruct Amundsen in our minds. As we subtract his adventures, ingenuity, endurance, accomplishments, and other morally neutral features from the man, do we not strip him of his greatness, piece by piece? In the end what stands before us is a slight Norwegian, a ruddy-faced baker perhaps, who is kind and friendly. He distributes sugar-frosted krumkakes to the village children, and then he dies. Fondly remembered by a few, for one generation. He was a good man. He lived well. He was missed by all who knew him. He was not great, but he was well liked.

Furthermore, if we strip Amundsen of his morally good features and leave his adventuring qualities alone, his greatness does not take much of a blow. Therefore goodness cannot be the sole bearer of greatness in humans.

5.3.3 Too Good for Greatness

In a paper called *Moral Saints*, Susan Wolf presents us with hypothetical entities who are moral saints. These moral saints are people who dedicate their lives to being as moral as they can:

First, a moral saint might be someone whose concern for others plays the role that is played in most of our lives by more selfish, or, at any rate, less morally worthy concerns. For the moral saint, the promotion of the welfare of others might play the role that is played for most of us by the enjoyment of material comforts, the opportunity to engage in the intellectual and physical activities of our choice, and the love, respect, and companionship of people whom we love, respect, and enjoy. The happiness of the moral saint, then, would truly lie in the happiness of others, and so he would devote himself to others gladly, and with a whole and open heart.

On the other hand, a moral saint might be someone for whom the basic ingredients of happiness are not unlike those of most of the rest of us. What makes him a moral saint is rather that he pays little or no attention to his own happiness in light of the overriding importance he gives to the wider concerns of morality. In other words, this person sacrifices his own interests to the interests of others, and feels the sacrifice as such.

> [...]We may refer to the first model as the model of the Loving Saint; to the second, as the model of the Rational Saint.
>
> (Wolf, 1982, p. 420)

A moral saint who is more than just a saint in his motivations and his sentiments because he is a *successful* moral saint who brings significant amounts of justice and goodness to the world and is also a great man. Even imperfect saints who have flaws in their characters, skeletons in their closets and blood on their hands are great people. Examples of these successful saints include Nelson Mandela, Ghandi, Mother Theresa, Jesus and Rama. There is little doubt that being very moral also makes one very great, both in itself and because being very moral is very hard (at least for the Rational Saint), it is very rare and it is very valuable.

But the ideal moral saint is a deformed human who does not live a life of quality, so argues Wolf, because any time and energy he spends on acting morally, is time which he could have spent on promoting other valuable aspects of his life. Since the ideal moral saint has spent *all* his time and energy on being moral, there is a huge deficiency of non-moral value in his life.

There are two problems with these moral saints which are relevant to greatness. One problem is that they neglect aspects of their lives which our intuitions say make for greatness. The other problem is that the moral saint lacks a *richness* and *diversity* of value in his or her life, and such a richness counts towards greatness.

The moral saint will suffer from an impoverished range of experience because he has not cultivated an appreciation for certain activities in life, such as aesthetic experiences. The moral saint will not have an appreciation for ballet, cognac, croquet, calculus, Benny Hill and other acquired tastes, because the kinds of tastes he will spend his time cultivating are moral ones, such as a taste for emancipation or a taste for punishment. The saint lacks certain relationships to other values which make a life more meaningful. This in itself is not a problem—we can't have it all anyway—the question is about the distribution of different values, not their total amount. As I interpret Wolf, it is inefficient to focus on only one value, such as morality. If we put in a hundred units of time, energy and attention into being moral, we might get *only* a hundred units of value out of it. But there is some distribution of a hundred units of time, energy and attention across several aspects of our lives, including the moral, creative, pleasurable, aesthetic, and so on, which will produce *more than* a hundred units of value.

The saint will also not engage in activities with goals which are non-moral but are great-making, such as the exploration of hazardous and exotic lands, composing operas, unravelling the secrets of the natural world or becoming emperor. The moral saint might have these goals, but they will not be goals for their own sake—any value they have for the saint will only be instrumental

for bringing about the right and the good. Being as good as one can be precludes one from being as great as one can be.

Part of Wolf's purpose is to show that there are things in our lives with values other than goodness and yet are also important. Indeed, "moral ideals do not, and need not, make the best personal ideals." (Wolf, 1982, p. 435) I think the basis for this fact is that we humans are more than generic persons and more than mere moral agents. Even still, as I discussed in the section on the meaning of "the great man", our personhood as humans has a particular character to differentiate it from generic personhood or personhood in other species such as angels, androids, gods, leprechauns and the Borg. Being exclusively moral neglects this special character. Since the primary topic of our discussion is greatness *for humans* and not greatness *for persons* nor greatness for *moral agents* the humanness and the human character of our personhood is relevant and should not be ignored. Wolf writes that "A person may be *perfectly wonderful* without being *perfectly moral*" (Wolf, 1982, p. 436), and by "person" she means "human person", which can be inferred from the examples she uses, all of which describe very human activities. Allow me some leeway for translation: I believe that one could replace the term "wonderful" in the quoted sentence with the term "great" and still remain faithful to Wolf's article.

If moral goodness and greatness were the same, then it would never be the case that increasing one's goodness is at the expense of one's greatness, nor would it ever be the case that the perfect moral saint is also the greatest man. Now, an increase in a man's moral goodness *can* cause his greatness to suffer and a saint can be improved by forgoing some of his righteousness for the sake of some other virtue, therefore the theory that moral goodness is greatness is false.

5.3.4 Admirable Immorality

Alexander the Great could have stayed home and performed puppet shows for the orphans of Macedonia. Instead he raised an army, founded cities, became a demigod to the Egyptians,

conquered the Persians and made a name for himself which has endured until now and will probably be remembered for tens of generations still. Everyone would have been better off if he had slipped a pair of embroidered socks with buttons for eyes on his hands and entertained the orphans with shows about the colourful antics of Eteocles and Polynices, those rascals! Instead of "Alexander the Kindly Puppeteer", he attained the title of "Alexander the Great". Conquering foreign lands, sacking cities and making oneself the stuff of legends is usually not a morally good thing to do. In fact, it involves doing quite a large amount of evil. Alexander is great in more than just name, and the enormities he brought do not discount him from realising his epithet.

Michael Slote gives an example of a man who is morally reprehensible yet is admirable in another way. Slote does not identify the value which is admirable in this case, though I believe he is speaking of greatness. The example he uses is of the artist Gauguin. Gauguin abandoned his family to pursue his art in the South Sea isles. When we understand his action as leaving his family for the islands and not merely as going to the islands then we see that "What Gauguin did was *wrong*, but still admirable—he followed a virtue other than morality. (Slote, 1983, pp. 80-4) This is not like the case of our admiration for a burglar, when we can separate our admiration of his daring from our disapproval of his criminal tendencies. Gauguin's betrayal of his family forms part of the deed which establishes his love for his art. (Slote, 1983, p. 79)

Since an act which is immoral is not necessarily a great-breaking act, moral goodness is not the whole measure for greatness.

Sometimes immorality itself can be great-making. Slote claims that people admire certain corrupt politicians *for* their brazen disregard for morality. (Slote, 1983, p. 100 f.) The feeling one gets from reading Slote is that he maintains more than it is just *possible* to actually admire these men for their wicked deed, but that admiration is an *appropriate* response to their wicked acts. Since that

which is great and that which is properly admired are the same things, immorality can make for greatness.

I happen to agree with Slote on this point and, I think, that there is something great-making in purposefully acting in some way *because* it is the wicked way to act.

5.3.5 Evil itself is not great-making

We should, however, be cautious in thinking that evil itself makes a person great. When we do long division and other extended calculations, one error early on in the calculation will carry through until the end, making the final result a mistake too (or an accidentally and improbably correct answer). Errors are often transitive in this way. One such mistake which I think people often make is that they take too many evil men as great men. As in long division, this final judgement comes from an error early on. The process of reasoning is to judge a man as admirable, which is not the same as worthy-of-admiration, and then to conclude that he is also great. The error comes in the initial judgement because we often confuse *appeal* with *admirability*. Those wicked and powerful men are appealing—in some way we want to *be* them.

(1) The Case of Tom Ramsay

In Somerset Maugham's short story, The Ant and the Grasshopper, we are introduced to a character called Tom Ramsay.(Maugham, 1951) "One day, without warning, he announced that he didn't like work and that he wasn't suited for marriage. He wanted to enjoy himself. He would listen to no expostulations. He left his wife and his office. He had a little money and he spent two happy years in the capitals of Europe." (Maugham, 1951, p. 96) Ramsay continues to live free. He borrows money from his many friends and never pays them back. The money he gets he squanders on luxuries. For the most part, his friends find him so convivial that they happily afford him the money,

knowing full well it will not be returned. At the age of 46 he marries a wealthy woman, quite his senior, who dies leaving him a fortune which enables him to his sybaritic lifestyle.

When one considers Tom Ramsay with respect to his greatness, he is a puzzling case. At first, one thinks he is a piddling wanton who is less than a man—perhaps a man reduced to the state of a delightful, puppy. At first one dismisses him as carefree and useless. But then another side shows itself, as we turn the idea of Ramsay about in our minds. Perhaps he really stands victorious above the rest of mankind—a man who has won some great prize and who does not deign to proclaim "I have won! I have beaten all of you in the secret contest played by all humanity!"

The idea that Tom has somehow accomplished something excellent in life is what embitters his serious and "respectable" brother, George, who Maugham uses as a counter-foil to Tom. Although Tom is disloyal, dishonest, indolent, and expedient, he has great-making qualities which are tied to his meaner characteristics. He is convivial, social and unconventional and also undoubtedly successful at realizing what he wants—and what he wants is not much more than pleasure and ease for himself. He even has significance in the lives of others, for he produces a good for them, which is pleasant company. Pleasant company is often underrated as a good. I am frequently inclined to maintain (quite seriously) that once a man has health, pleasant company and access to the arts he has no right to ask for more. (I am also frequently compelled by Reason to broaden my definition of these goods, but that is another matter). The exploitation of lesser men (to a certain extent) is a privilege of greater men, so the claim that Tom does exploit people cannot count against his greatness unless we previously and independently show than Tom is an inferior man. His unconventionality exhibits that he is not run of the mill, which may be a necessary condition for greatness and certainly does not count against it. But what could count positively for his greatness? That would be his secret victory which is bound to his expedience. Tom lives on his own terms, unconstrained by the strictures of society's view of "acceptable practice." Tom wants to live voluptuously and pleasantly. Once loyalty to family, moral proscriptions on honesty and

puritanical conventions of sobriety get in his way, then so much the worse for them. Tom lives as though these common things are beneath him and do not apply to him. The more which lies beneath one, and the greater the things he treads on, the greater he is.

I do hope that the reader recoils from the preceding evaluation of Tom's character. My argument may have a seeming of soundness, but I am certain that we decently minded philosophers have a strong intuition that Tom is, in fact, a wastrel of the lowest kind. A further examination of his facets would show why; however a further examination is not what I wish to focus on. The curious matter is why we did not straightaway judge Tom to be a wretch. I think it is because we were hoodwinked by the incredible attractiveness of his character. Through introspection, we find that we mistook attractiveness for admirability. When we make this mistake several errors in our understanding of greatness can arise because that which we find attractive is not always that which we ought to admire. This I believe, is part of the reason why the two positions, that evil can make one great and that greatness is self-realisation, seem at first to be so plausible.

I do not wish to maintain that those positions are false, just that we should be on guard against being bamboozled into them by taking appeal for admirability. In Tom Ramsay's case we may want to live his lifestyle. The life of a kind-hearted rogue and lovable rapscallion has a romantic appeal. Even the wicked have an appeal—they can be fantastically captivating. Consider Darth Vader, Milton's Satan and Genghis Kahn. They are all quite evil and they are all quite attractive. In some warped way we do want be them, even if only for a little while.

5.3.6 How Evil Does (Not) Make Greatness

I doubt that evil *itself* bears greatness, at least not directly. However, of the great men, so many of them are evil and their evil deeds made them great. Perhaps the attractiveness of Milton's Satan makes us think he is admirable, and we *might* mistakenly combine the two attitudes. But I think that Satan really *is* great for defying God and continuing to do so and even winning some small

victories against the King(dom) of Heaven. Aside from his greatness, Satan is immoral: the wrong which he (initially) committed was to disrespect the difference in greatness between himself and God, for which he was punished. This is the wrong of hubris, which has already been discussed.

The *evil* of Satan is not what does the work in making him great, all it does is make him evil. It would be strange for evil, which is a *dis*value in general to count towards greatness which is a positive (meta)value. The evil doesn't do the work in making one great. You can take a blue object and put it in a sack, and then keep adding more blue things and for every blue item you add the sack will get heavier, and you may notice that the more blue that's in there the heavier it gets. But the blueness of the button and of the sapphire and of the hummingbird do no work in making the sack heavier. Blue things all have some mass and *that* is what weighs down the sack. Evil people also tend to have certain qualities, tied into their evilness, which are great-making.

In Dostoevskii's *Notes from Underground,* the narrator lauds the defiance of principled actions. Ironically, he even counts expedience or "acting to one's advantage" as acting according to principles—perhaps the principle of prudence.

> Why, in the first place, when in all these thousands of years has there been a time when man has acted only from his own interest? What is to be done with the millions of facts that bear witness that men, *consciously*, that is fully understanding their real interests, have left them in the background and have rushed headlong on another path, to meet peril and danger, compelled to this course by nobody and by nothing, but, as it were, simply disliking the beaten track, and have obstinately, wilfully, struck out another difficult, absurd way, seeking it almost in the darkness. So, I suppose, this obstinacy and perversity were pleasanter to them than any advantage.

> ...[M]an everywhere and at all times, whoever he may be, has preferred to act as he chose and not in the least as his reason and advantage dictated. And one may choose what is contrary to one's own interests, and sometimes one *positively ought* (that is my idea). One's own free unfettered choice, one's own caprice, however wild it may be, one's own fancy worked up at times to frenzy—is that very 'most advantageous advantage' which we have overlooked, which comes under no classification and against which all systems and theories are continually being shattered to atoms. And how do these wiseacres know that man wants a normal, a virtuous choice? What has made them conceive that man must want a rationally advantageous choice? What man wants is simply *independent* choice, whatever that independence may cost and wherever it may lead.
>
> (Dostoevskii, 1960, p. 34ff)

Dostoevskii's narrator puts across the idea that we act in order to evince our autonomy. At its weakest, this is a descriptive psychological claim, but he then suggests that we *ought* to strive to manifest our power over natural, moral, social and prudential principles which steer us this way or that. What I would like to extract from this position is that there is value in acting in a way which disregards—nay, *defies*—such constraints upon our agency. I am certain that a man ought to act on his own terms and that great men *do* act on their own terms and that is part of what makes them great. However, the Undergound Man calls for more than this: not only should we follow our own will, but we should strive to act *against* the other forces which draw us this way or that. These forces include the will of other men, the customs of the tribe, principles of prudence, moral precepts and even the immutable course of Nature herself.

When a man acts *against* morality he manifests several great-making qualities. One of these qualities is a kind of *integrity*. The integrity I speak of here is not the kind of integrity where a man slavishly follows the laws of morality, nor is it the kind of integrity where a man practices what he

preaches. It is the integrity which comes from *autonomy* where a man lives on *his own terms*. He may live by principles which he has developed for himself or he may live whimsically whereby he acts on his own capricious desires for no more reason than *because they are his.* The man with integrity may *happen* to live accordingly with the moral code but this is just a happy accident. Integrity like this makes for greatness because it is, in a way, a man lifting himself up onto the throne of greatness. A great man's will is due respect, as has already been discussed. By treating his own self with respect he *makes himself great*. At first glance this surely looks like a case of putting the cart before the horse, but it is not. This is a special case of valuing begetting value. The value is got like this:

When I respect your will I give it positive consideration when I decide how to act; and my actions have a degree of power to influence the world. Thereby and therefore, your will has more power to influence the world—it has an extra agent, who is me. (To put it crudely: the respect I have for you makes the object of your desire become the object of my desire too.) A will with more power is a greater will. A person with a greater will is a greater person. Greatness of person makes for greatness in a human. Therefore, having a will which is respected makes for greatness in a human. When the respect for a will comes from the very same person who has the will, then that person is effecting his own greatness.

There is an alternate way of looking the valuing begetting value. In order to understand it in the context of the discussion on integrity and immorality we must view moral principles as a will. This is not an illicit fallacy of the bait-and-switch kind, because the aspect of will, in the case of integrity, which is relevant to the discussion is the same one associated to moral principles. That shared aspect is that both an opposing will and moral principles are *action guiding*, at least in the world of values. In the world of facts there are also things which influence the power of a will such as pain, which can make ones actions hard and lead to akrasia (weakness of will), as well as physical

obstacles which can make ones actions ineffective. The alternate way of the valuing begetting value is this:

When I respect your will I give it positive consideration in my actions. This makes it more likely that I will realize your will. This makes you more powerful (think of how the emperor wields so much power because of the many citizens who respect his will). Power makes for greatness in a man. Therefore by having his will respected a man is made greater. When the respect for a will comes from the very same person who has the will, then that person impels his own greatness. When he respects his own will over another will *or over moral principles*, he makes himself more powerful and thereby makes himself greater.

Of course, having integrity will not always involve *defying* some principle, whether they are moral principles or other kinds of principles. It will often be a case of *overcoming* both practical and psychic obstacles to manifest one's will in action or realise as states of affairs. Evil can lead to greatness in other ways. In our world—the world where we humans *do* live—it is quite hard to be evil. We have natural inclinations to be kind to people who are kind to us and also we are also inclined to tell the truth. These inclinations might be innate to the species or inculcated into us by society, but either way they are there and in order to be evil a man must have some strength of will to overcome these inclinations. Furthermore, most societies have set up disincentives to being evil. Many social systems support institutions such as punishment, revenge, reparations, compensation, banishment, shame, and so on, in order to make it hard to do evil. An evil man must have the courage to face these counter-evils in order to practice his wicked ways—and courage is an admirable quality in a man. Furthermore, in order to be atrociously evil a mean spirit is not enough: one must be able to *effect* a great amount of evil. This requires having *impact* on the world. Those men who are both great and terrible, such as Hitler, Satan, Vader, Voldemort and Manson are great because their evil made a large impact on the world. Aside from the impact itself, in order to have

that impact, a man would most likely require certain great-making virtues such as courage, social influence, renown, ingenuity, perseverance and so on.

It is not necessary to be evil in order to have the aforementioned great-making virtues, and the evil is not the true bearer of greatness in the cases of men who are both great and heinous. However, the evil does give these men and their virtues an immoral taint which is inimical to the theory that greatness is goodness, provided that courage, for instance, can be tainted when it assists a man in his wickedness. Just as Gauguin's great-making deed is inseparable from its wickedness, the great-making virtues *and* deeds of many of these admirably atrocious fellows is also inseparable from their immorality.

So I have presented four reasons to support the claim that evil can make for greatness. I do not think that any one of them is a particularly potent objection; however, when taken together they put pressure against the theory that greatness is goodness. To recapitulate, the four reasons are: the moral taint of great-making characteristics, inseparability of evilness from greatness in certain deed, the wilful great-making defiance of moral principles and the common (and contingent) conjunction of great evil with great impact.

5.4 Nozickian reality and greatness

Sometime after undertaking this project, I was given a copy of Robert Nozick's *The Examined Life* to read. In my readings of it, I came across a list of men which he compiled. He listed "Socrates, Gandhi, Einstein, Jesus, Napoleon, and Lincoln" (Nozick, 1990, p. 209) This list immediately struck me as a list of great men. But Nozick does not call them great. According to him, they are exceptionally *real* men. I wondered whether Nozick's understanding of *real* corresponds with my concept of *great*. Perhaps he has developed a theory of greatness, I thought. Now the word "real", when used as a predicate, usually suggests that its subject exists. But what about great persons who

never existed, such as God, Odysseus or Rama? Happily, Nozick does not mean for *real* to imply existence, at least because reality can admit of degrees but actuality cannot (Nozick, 1990, p. 138). Elsewhere, he presents a list of fictional characters which he considers to be very real, these characters are "Hamlet, Sherlock Holmes, Lear, Antigone, Don Quixote, [and] Raskolnikov." (Nozick, 1990, p. 130) The reason he thinks that they are more real is that they are more integrated wholes who are very vivid in our imaginations with a sharpness of detail and "they are intent on focussing" on some goal or some aspect of their fictional world. I think the point he is trying to make is that there is a lot going on with these fictional characters and that, whatever is going, is to a high degree. To me, that sounded very much like greatness, for which great men also have pluralistic values to a high degree.

To be fair, Nozick never puts forward a theory that greatness is completely a matter of reality such that the more real one is, the greater one is. I do not think that such a theory works nor is it purported to—but by examining it we gain a rich understanding of greatness: on what it is, what it is not and how it relates to things. The purpose of this section is not to show that greatness is or is not equitable with reality, even though that is what it aims at. The purpose and aim can come apart just the purpose of playing chess is to have fun or make money, where the aim of a game of chess is to checkmate your opponents king. The purpose of this section is to bring to the fore some issues about greatness in preparation for the *grand finale*.

According to Nozick, there are several aspects to the reality of a thing. These include goodness, creativity, completeness, intensity, beauty, purpose and so on. Some of these elements are simple properties, some are relationships with other things, some are *teloi*, and some are ideal states for a thing to be in. So, in the field of development, something has (inner) *maturation*, it has (outer) *growth* from a lesser state into a better one, all the time aiming at its *purpose* and hopefully achieving its *destiny*. (Nozick, 1990, p. 190). Development is only one of various fields which together form the matrix of reality. The other fields and their elements are, some of them, very weird and

esoteric. These fields show modes of being. As a thing begins to exemplify elements closer to the ideal for its fields and when it exemplifies an element more strongly it becomes more real. It becomes a richer or more striking thing.

Nozick's view in *The Examined Life* has several details which can be revised or changed without changing the core spirit of his position. For instance, his matrix of reality has a certain (contrived) structure with intersecting dimensions, such that where the dimensions of independence and *telos* intersect they produce autonomy. This specific can easily be revised, as can be the layout of matrix, without drastically changing the total idea. Perhaps autonomy should be a real-making property, but some vague concept close to autonomy might do the job. Nozick also has a conception of value as a unity of a diversity. This notion of value deviates from our normal view of it, but whether or not he is correct, we can use our normal concept of value for much of what Nozick does. In light of this, it would be unproductive to nitpick at his account of reality when we apply it as a theory of greatness. Therefore I will only look at his theory broadly when I evaluate it as a candidate for identity with greatness.

The bearers of reality have a complete diversity because they cover every aspect of being. A thing becomes more real by becoming more good, more creative, more complete, having more value, having more serenity(?), having more breadth and amplitude and being more self-creating or autonomous. These certainly seem like great-making qualities, and, mostly they are. But they alose make for something other than greatness.

Sadly, our hopes for a theory of greatness are dashed once again. Nozick's matrix of reality does not allow for an aspectual account of reality, such that the same thing can be more real from one aspect than another. It does not allow for Thatcher can be very real as a prime minister but not as mother—if she's real then she has that degree of reality throughout. This is not to say that reality

goes unqualified—only that it has a limited range of aspect by which it can be qualified. To be fair though, Nozick admits that we speak of "someone's being a real ballplayer, a real poet, a real man."

The limit of qualification for reality is but one: if something is real it is real *as a thing*. By "thing" I mean something which can be an actual entity or substance. Things include tables, horses, tureens of vichyssoise, centaurs, Moses and Gandhi. Nozick has possibly even limited reality to only persons, for that is the focus of his enquiry. Nevertheless, persons are things, and so can be contrasted against non-things, which include the theory of gravity, set theory, a novel (the text, not the physical book), π, and the experience of seeing red.

It may at first seem as though some of the elements of reality can apply to non-things, but this is a mistake of metaphor. For set theory to be elegant, far-reaching and fundamental is quite different to what it means for Socrates to be elegant, far-reaching and fundamental. For set theory, elegance is the simplicity of the wording of the theory; it is far-reaching in the sense that it is applicable or useful for other theories; and it is fundamental in that it explains, logically, facts in other theories and its derivation is not too many steps removed from any axioms. For Socrates to be elegant, it means that he dances gracefully; he is far-reaching in that has a significant impact on world history; and he is fundamental in that he forms a necessary physical part of a larger object. I don't think there are many similarities between Socrates and set theory, and we cannot compare their greatnesses because they do not share any genus by which we can compare them—not even as *things*. Although we cannot compare the greatness of Socrates as a man and the greatness of set theory as a mathematical theory, Socrates is a great man and set theory is a great mathematical theory. But set theory is not permitted to be great if it needs to also be real, for it cannot be real nor have more or less reality.

Nozick does write about the dimensions of reality cutting across different ontological categories. He writes that:

> Depth is a quality we also prize. Whether in a work of art, an emotion, a scientific theory, a mathematical theorem, a person, or a mode of understanding, the deeper, the better.[...] A deep scientific theory connects with many other theories and problems, a deep emotion reverberates amongst many others and produces many changes.
>
> (Nozick, 1990, p. 180)

But, as I have just written, these can only be metaphors using the term "depth". On this point I think Nozick is completely wrong.

There is no notion of a threshold along the scale of reality whereafter something becomes great. We would like to say of some things that they are not at all *great* at all, but we cannot say of some things that they are not at all *real* (keep in mind that non-existent or non-actual things, such as Hamlet, can have a measure of reality.)

In the list of fictional characters above, Nozick included some wretches in the mix, namely Don Quixote and Raskolnikov. Cervantes' Don Quixote is a deluded buffoon who fails to accomplish his goals or to face up to actuality. Dostoevskii's Raskolnikov is a deluded weakling who convinced of his own greatness but unable to manifest this supposed greatness because of his neuroses. Don Quixote is ridiculous and Raskolnikov is pathetic. Neither of these men, I think, are great. They are more real, as can be tested by how vivid they seem to us, by how they make such an impact our imagination and by how they draw our attention (Nozick thinks our intuitions can detect greater reality like this).

The wretches can be real without being great or without having much value. Being more real does not mean having more value. Nozick sees reality as the most fundamental evaluative category because even value itself is just one of many ways of being more real. Value is just one of the

elements in the matrix of reality, or maybe just one set of elements of reality that is called *Light* which comes quite close to our understanding of value. It is hard for to know which because many of the concepts Nozick uses are peculiar. Either way, value is just a part of makes for reality. Nozick allows for something to be very real but have little value. However, I have taken having greatness to imply having more value. So greatness cannot be Nozick's notion of reality. Nozick does, however, have an ideal for value, which is perfection.

The conception of intrinsic value which Nozick usually applies is that of a unity-of-a-diversity, such that the degree of value is a matter of the degree of diversity to the degree it has been unified. (Nozick, 1990, pp. 162-3) This notion of value has a reasonably strong relationship to the notion of ideas of greatness in people. Diversity, as has been shown, counts as a great-making property. The greater the diversity of great-making qualities a person has, the greater a person they are. I have also written that the great-man is the more valuable man, but "valuable" in this sense comes close to meaning "importance" in Nozick's sense, as is explained below.

Nozick *does* relate an element called "greatness" to reality. Greatness fits into the matrix as a *telos* (which is an aim, and end or a final goal) for a field of reality called *substance, power,* or *strength* (Nozick changes the name as he refines the concept.) Within that field, the element of reality which a thing has is called its weight, the way it relates to other things is known as *importance*, and the ideal limit for power is *omnipotence*.

In order to come to his understanding of greatness, Nozick begins with a dimension of reality called *importance*. For a person to be important, not only must they have the power to affect the world, but the important person is also considered, paid attention and taken into account by others. These two aspects of importance fit with what I have been saying about the great man all along: that he matters, and that he is due both admiration and respect. In the world we live in, having importance often involves power, fame, wealth and impact. (Nozick, 1990, pp. 174-8) Importance, as

I see it, is a large part of being a person. Being a person involves being an agent which means being able to do things, which is to affect the world. Persons are also due respect merely for being persons, though of course the greater ones are due more respect.

The next dimension which Nozick looks at is *weight*. Weight is "a resistance to external change. [...] A person, an opinion, a principle, or an emotion has weight if it maintains and re-establishes itself in its in the face of outside pressures or forces." (Nozick, 1990, p. 178) Weight is another essential part of being a person because it allows a person to maintain their personal identity. Weight for persons is also about integrity and living on one's own terms. I have written previously on how much I think living on one's own terms is an important characteristic of a great man, because it makes a man the person he is and personhood counts heavily for greatness in a man.

The fulfilment of power, strength or "substance" is greatness, writes Nozick. He tersely sums up greatness in one paragraph:

> What is the goal or fulfilment of strength? Two things on the list might fit: power—but isn't this last simply a wider term to describe strength?—and greatness. Our discussion of importance distinguished its two aspects: external impact, and being taken account of. We could try to continue this division across the strength row. Greatness, the fulfilment of strength, would therefore have two aspects. Power fulfils strength in its aspect of impact; what fulfils how something is taken account of? Are autonomy and being loved the fulfilment of being taken account of? Omnipotence is the ideal limit of the impact aspect of strength; what is the ideal limit of its being taken account of? I suppose it is being worshipped.
>
> (Nozick, 1990, p. 186)

What Nozick has taken as a definition for greatness, I take for issues surrounding greatness. I have written of how a great man matters and of how he is due active respect and should be the object of admiration. Furthermore, I put forward God as the greatest possible person, and Nozick agrees with me that at least two of God's aspects, which are omnipotence and being worshipped, are the ideal limits for greatness. However, where I have mostly discussed what comprises greatness, Nozick discusses what greatness comprises. Greatness, according Nozick, contributes towards making a man more real.

5.5 Transcendence

Immanuel Kant developed a general rule for deriving moral principles from the *formal* conceptual features of moral principles. For example, from the formal feature "ought implies can" he deduced a normative moral rule that we (only) ought to act on principles which are logically possible for everyone to follow. In my opinion, what Kant did was import theories from metaethics into theories of normative ethics, or to turn a formal account into a substantive one. There is much more to be said about this, but such a discussion would wander too far off topic. This method of doing philosophy is a sound one, which, I think, can be very productive for composing a good theory of greatness.

When we look at the formal aspects of greatness, which were mostly discussed in the first chapter, which gives a rough analysis of the concept of greatness, there are a few main features of form which stand out. One is that greatness is aspectual; in other words, greatness applies to a thing only relative to one of the *types* which the thing falls under. This thing may or not be great *as a man* or *as a musician* or *as ballast*. Another feature is that greatness comes in degrees—one thing can be greater than another and some things are not great at all. Yet another important formal feature of greatness is that, depending on the aspect, it may be borne by a diverse array of characteristics such as all of a things deeds, personality, beauty, morality and renown. Greatness also implies a high

magnitude of some qualities—a great thing is more and better and higher in some way that what is typical. The theory of greatness which I propose, for both men and for anything else which is great, is that greatness is *transcendence of type* or just *transcendence,* for short. This theory both accounts for the formal features of greatness and also gives the right answers when checked against what things which are and which are not great.

We already have concepts of transcendence and I think that our normal understanding of the concept is very close, if not identical, to what I mean by "transcendence" for this theory. I do not call the theory "transcendence *of type*" because it is about a special kind of transcendence, because appending "of type" is really quite redundant—all transcendence is "of type". The reason I name it thus is to show that where greatness is concerned, there is a strong emphasis on the *kind* of thing a substance is. *Transcendence (of type) obtains for a thing (of that type) when that thing exceeds its kind in a way which ennobles it.* There are two ways in which a thing can exceed its kind, which are: in quality and in quantity.

5.5.1 Exceeding by Quality

For a thing to exceed its type in quality is to have a quality that is unusual for its kind. The term "quality" is meant to be very broad and it goes beyond universal properties (such as redness) to include features (such as courage), relational properties (such as tall, which is relative to the average height for a kind), characterizing predicates (such as "— is the King" or "— walked on the moon") and even property-properties (such as second order diversity). These qualities can be either intrinsic or extrinsic, and often fall somewhere in between.

Transcending one's type with an intrinsic quality shows why divinity made for greatness in Jesus: being divine is not a typical feature of humans. Transcending one's type is *notable.* Sometimes we find a person who has a very unusual role to play, which is not one which humans usually have, such as the role of prophet in the case of Mohammed or emperor in the case of Napoleon

Bonaparte. We are even inclined to quickly declare anyone with an unusual role, such as cosmonaut, as great. Just being a cosmonaut does not make a person great—we discover this when we reflect as to whether Tereshkova is great and we explore the full meaning of the term "great" and conclude that she is not made great just by being a cosmonaut because that quality does not ennoble her; that she was the first *woman* in space at least makes her notable; which fits nicely with the theory of transcendence for greatness.

Extrinsic qualities can also effect a transcendence of type. Neil Armstrong was brought towards greatness by being the first human to walk on the moon. Very few people have walked on the moon and, what is more, Armstrong was *the first*. Being first makes both the deed transcendent and the man who performed it transcendent. It has always been a mystery to me as why these *firsts* matter so much—why it matters whether someone is the first human or the first woman or the first African to traverse a passage or to climb a mountain or be elected as president. But this puzzle is my private conundrum, the intuitions of the rest of humankind seem to embrace it as something significant, and the theory of transcendence accounts for it. A person's type is given (as human, woman or African) and then an unusual quality for that type is brought forward—that they walked on the moon or became president. This quality exceeds the type more for the first instance than for the second because once the first has walked on the moon or been elected president, the quality becomes progressively less atypical in the cases of the second, third, fourth and so on. Since the extrinsic quality becomes less atypical for the successors the further down the line they go, it becomes less transcendent for them and therefore is less great-making.

It might seem that the theory of transcendence allows for some rather bizarre cases of greatness because it implies that any atypical quality which ennobles can make for greatness. One response to this would be to reject the theory, but another response would be to revise our notions of what counts as bizarre for greatness. I do not believe that the later response is an unreasonable one because there *are* bizarre cases of greatness in humans. For example, there is a folktale about a

little Dutch boy who, one day, walked past a lonely section of the dike in Haarlem and noticed that the dike had developed a little hole. Water trickled through the hole, and as it did so it carried away more and more of the dike with it, making the hole bigger and bigger. The boy (who in some tales is called Peter and in others Hans Brinker) saw that the dike would be swept away and Haarlem would be inundated. So the boy plugged up the hole with his index finger. Soon night fell, and the air turned bitterly cold. But still the boy remained with his finger in the dike. All through the night he endured the chill and the gloom and the weariness which came over him. Nevertheless, he stoically kept his finger jammed into the leak throughout. When morning arrived the boy who saved Haarlem was found standing there by the dike. Engineers were promptly called in and the structural integrity of the dike was restored. This boy was made great by being a something which very few people ever get to be, and which even fewer people are ennobled by being. Little Hans Brinker was made great by being a human plug. He was truly great as a human being; and amongst plugs and bungs he may count as the greatest of them all.

5.5.2 Exceeding by Quantity

The other way in which a type can be exceeded is by the magnitude of some quality. When the excess is ennobling then there is a case of transcendence of type and therefore a case of greatness.

Although all men have some intelligence, Einstein's intelligence and Sherlock Holmes's acumen make them great because their intellects far exceed the standard for their type. Part of what makes Wilbur Wilburforce so great is that he saved thousands of people from being enslaved and effected the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. It is not only atypical for a man to have as much goodness and resolve as Wilburforce, but it is atypical for a man to effect such a large degree of significant change on the world.

A question remains as to what counts as excess. How much of an effect on the world must a man have in order for it to count as excessive for a man? As I explained in the first chapter on the rarity of great men, it must at least be enough to make such quantities rare. Rarity is not a sharp mark either—it is somewhat vague and also admits of degrees. However, even if a quality is exceeded to the point of scarcity amongst the population this is not sufficient for greatness. The property must also add value to the candidate for greatness *and* the excess must be enough to result in or contribute to the candidate being valuable.

5.5.3 Ennobling

The difference between transcendence and mere excess is that for transcendence to obtain, the exceeding quality must ennoble the thing—it must not make it worse nor make no difference at all to its value; to ennoble something is to add positive value to it. In my definition of transcendence of type above I used the term "exceed" because it works to emphasise the "ennobling" element of transcendence, which we commonly see as an increase or an improvement or a becoming-more; so, for the most part, when I write of transcendence and qualities, the term "exceed" suggests this increase of some feature. In truth, a more neutral and accurate wording would be "to depart from", such that to transcend one's type is to have a quality or a degree of some quality which departs from one's type (makes it atypical) and also ennobles it. It is an excess of quality (or departure from type) for a man to have blue skin, but generally this does not ennoble him because it does not improve him. The same can be said if he had quantitative excess of body hair—hirsuteness would not usually ennoble a man either.

At this point it is helpful to note that the ennobling should be seen on a case-to-case basis and *not* in general nor as something which is commonly so. In general, being a plug does not ennoble a human, and nor does blueness or hairiness. However, in some cases these qualities do ennoble, for instance, the little Dutch boy was great for being a human plug. Courage, which is to

have a high magnitude of resolve when faced with danger, is commonly ennobling. But, in cases of recklessness, this courage does not ennoble.

To ennoble something, as I mean it, is to make something into a valuable, a worthful (it's a real word) or a good thing. What I mean by "valuable", "worthy" and "good" is not anything esoteric—I mean it in the everyday common understanding of the word. I have spoken to several non-philosophers who have common understandings of terms in order to discover the features of valuable things. What I have learned from the *hoi polloi* is that to merely add value to a thing is not to make it valuable. If the thing is still mediocre or cruddy even after adding some value, it is still not valuable. *Enough* value must be added—if Ephialtes the betrayer of the Spartans saved a single bunny from a snare, or cultivated his watercolour skills he would be a better man for these things, but this would neither make him a good man nor a noble man—he would still be quite wretched. In this case, the bunny-saving and artistic cultivation do *improve* Ephialtes but they *fail* to ennoble him. For a fact to be ennobling it must *succeed* in making something have positive worth, at least from some aspect.

Ennobling is not simply a synonym for greatness because a man can be ennobled without being made great if he fails to exceed his kind, or at least the degree ennobling is disproportionally large in comparison to the increase in (or towards) greatness.

For instance, imagine that the village idiot wanders out of doors one evening during a violent hail storm. Fortune then strikes him a hard blow on the head with a sizeable hail stone, possibly as big as a grapefruit. Fortune is overcome with remorse, and so to compensate the poor imbecile she makes the blow dislodge whatever obstacle in his brain was retarding his intellect. He remains as sweet and gentle and renowned as he was, just not as simple. He thereby attains a normal intelligence for a human and is ennobled as a human in the process. He now has positive worth, but

not much. Since he does not *exceed* his kind in intelligence (he just attains a normal intelligence for a human) he neither transcends nor becomes great.

Furthermore, a non-person thing can also be ennobled, but if this ennobling does not come about from exceeding a specific kind, then it does not become great in that kind. For example, a musical jockey who wins the Kentucky Derby is ennobled. But he cannot count as a greater musician for it because his ennobling is not due to him exceeding his kind as a musician.

5.5.4 Transcendental Explanations

(1) The Failure of Perfection

If the theory of transcendence of type is true, it gives additional reason to reject perfectionism as a theory of greatness. Greatness cannot be perfection because, according to the theory of transcendence, greatness is to *surpass* some standard, not to *realise* it. When it comes to exceeding by quantity, the standards for transcendence are lower than those for perfection, since transcendence only asks that we exceed what is typical, whereas the bar set by perfection might be either much higher than what is typical or even be lower than what is typical in the case of a society with really splendid members. With respect to exceeding by quality, transcendence rewards stepping out of the bounds of one's species whereas perfection focuses strictly on being the best one can be of one's kind.

(2) Extrinsic Value

Many of the features which we would normally say can make a man great are extrinsic features of a man. These include his wealth, accomplishments, reputation, lineage and so on. Some of these I am suspicious of as great-making virtues, but in the popular mind they are candidates for greatness. Since facts should come *before* theory, the theory of transcendence is in a healthy position because it allows for these sorts of features to run as serious candidates as great-makers.

Some person can exceed what is typical in wealth, reputation and royal lineage. But transcendence of type also puts a check on rampant greatness by insisting that the excess ennobles.

(3) Morality

Most of the moral issues which surround greatness are founded on the claim that the great man is the more valuable man and therefore the more valuable person. The transcendence of type contains this idea, for ennobling involves having value. Under transcendence of type, the extra value is not synthetic and does not need to be linked to greatness—it is a part of what it means to be great.

(4) Degrees

Since a thing can be ennobled by exceeding its kind to various degree of ennoblement, it allows for there to be various degrees of greatness. It even allows for something to be just a little great, which is quite acceptable. The examples of great men which have been used in this paper are most of them of *very* great men. Men of such calibre have been used because they make for clear and striking examples. Although most of us have never met men of such calibre, amongst our acquaintances we know people and other things which we would happily call great. They *are* great, but only just a little great. The theory of transcendence allows for things to be just a little great, for one can exceed what is typical for one's kind by just a little and the ennobling excess can be only a little rare.

(5) Rarity

Transcendence of Type explains why greatness tends to be rare. This captures the spirit that great men, great things, are *special* or *extraordinary*. If something were not extraordinary it would not exceed its type, for it would be ordinary, and so could be neither rare nor great. Furthermore, if something did not attain value to a point which was atypical for its kind it would not be a valuable thing either, and so not a great one—it would not be extraordinary *in a way which matters*. But

greatness does matter (and consists of qualities which matter), as has been explained in the section of greatness and morality. Transcendence of type shows how the nature of greatness accounts for the scarcity of it in the world.

Since transcendence of type uses what is typical for the type as the threshold for excess, the norm for what is typical changes as the population of that type changes. If the population becomes better in a certain quality or a new quality becomes popular then acquiring it will not make for greatness. There was a time when having circumnavigated the globe would have made an explorer great, even if just a little bit. But now global circumnavigating is both so easy and so prevalent that it will neither ennoble a man nor will it allow him to exceed his kind. Nowadays, explorers seeking greatness need to curl up in a space shuttle and go to Mars. This will make such a person an explorer who matters—people will care whether this explorer gets there, they will also shed many tears when he fails to return, he will grab both their attention and their imaginations. These responses both make him matter more and are signs that our intuition views him as mattering more.

(6) Individuality

Individuality is a great-making quality which few theories account for. But the great men we know of all have something special about them. Looking and composers, Beethoven and Mozart are both great composers, but if Beethoven's work resembled Mozart's then we wouldn't think Beethoven was as great (and possibly not great at all). Individuality and uniqueness are not necessary for a man to be great, but it does help. The theory of transcendence explains why uniqueness and individuality count for greatness and why great men tend to be different from other men. This is because greatness only comes when a man exceeds his type in quality or quantity, which is exceptional.

(7) Admiration

Exceeding type makes it interesting and worthy of our attention. Ennobling makes one feel as though it is fortunate that this deviates from its kind in a good way. As though there is some providence. Now deviants, such as disfigured people and glorious freaks, can fascinate us, but we do not feel uplifted by seeing them, if anything we feel pity or repulsion. An inclination to respect is based on a natural inclination to preserve what is good and fascinating—not only the thing itself but its value and curiousness. Since we like that which is different and uplifting, we are inclined to protect the way it is and even promote its uplifting qualities. Aiming to preserve the way a man is involves wanting to preserving their aims, their dignity and so on, which is what would be expected if they were respected.

5.5.5 End

The reason I left the theory of transcendence for greatness for last has nothing to do with it being a good theory, which I doubt it is. My reason is that it is a theory that is built up from the relationships which greatness has to other things, and so in developing the theory I could bring together most of what has been discussed in this dissertation. The purpose of the enquiry was not an interrogation where the answer to some specific question was sought. It was more like a bug hunt: biologists spread out huge nets beneath the forest canopy, then they shake the trees or send up soporific fumes to see what tiny creatures drop down. From the fall of little animals, the scientist learns about the forest in which they dwell; he learns about systems and cycles and so on. In this paper I have attempted to uncover the secrets behind greatness in men by probing the idea this way and that, observing what reveals itself and, finally, stitching the clues together. Whether we have arrived at good theory of greatness for men, I do not know. But I hope that we have cleared away the vapour obscuring that lofty pedestal and caught a clearer view of the great man who stands atop it.

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