
ADMIRATION OVER TIME

BY

ALFRED ARCHER, AND BENJAMIN MATHESON

Abstract: In this paper, we investigate the diachronic fittingness conditions of admiration – that is, what it takes for a person to continue or cease to be admirable over time. We present a series of cases that elicit judgements that suggest different understandings of admiration over time. In some cases, admirability seems to last forever. In other cases, it seems that it can cease within a person's lifetime if she changes sufficiently. Taken together, these cases highlight what we call *the puzzle of admiration over time*. We then present a potential solution to this puzzle.

1. Introduction

Walking through an art gallery, we might admire the beautiful paintings it contains. Attending a political rally, we might admire its courageous leaders. Thinking about a foe, we might find ourselves admiring their tenacity despite our animosity towards them. We also admire people for the actions they perform. Such agential admiration is our focus in this paper. More specifically, we are concerned with accounting for admiration over time for actions – that is, the conditions under which a person who is admirable for *A*-ing at t_1 remains or ceases to be admirable for *A*-ing at t_2 .

One reason we focus on admiration for actions is that admiration over time for traits seems to be a simple matter. If a person is admirable at t_1 for having courage but she no longer has courage at t_2 , then at t_2 , she is no longer admirable for having courage. After all, she ceases to possess that which made her admirable – her courage – and so she ceases to be admirable for that. It remains the case that she *was* admirable and so we could admire the kind of person she *was* (i.e., her earlier self), but because she is no longer admirable, we cannot admire the kind of person she now *is* (i.e., her current

Pacific Philosophical Quarterly 101 (2020) 669–689 DOI: 10.1111/papq.12324

©2020 The Author

Pacific Philosophical Quarterly © 2020 University of Southern California and John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

self). However, the fact that an action has been performed cannot be undone by the passage of time. If a person performs an admirable act at t_1 , then it will always be true that she did something admirable at t_1 no matter what happens in the future. So it might seem that a person being admirable for an action also cannot be undone.

In Section 2, however, we consider a case in which a person seems to cease being admirable for actions she was admirable for earlier. We then consider another case that seems to suggest we cannot cease being admirable for actions we were previously admirable for. These two cases highlight a puzzle. Why is it that admirability for actions sometimes persists and sometimes does not? The rest of the paper attempts to solve this puzzle. In Section 3, we consider whether distinguishing between moral and non-moral admiration can solve this puzzle. While this does provide a way of accommodating the conflicting judgements elicited by the cases we consider in Section 2, we then consider two more cases that undermine this proposal. In Section 4, we outline our solution to this puzzle, according to which a person ceases being admirable for a past action when she performs an action or series of actions that function as *defeaters* for the earlier actions for which she was once admirable.

2. *The puzzle of admiration over time*

Aung San Suu Kyi is the *de facto* civilian leader of Myanmar (formerly Burma), considered by some to be Asia's equivalent to Nelson Mandela, 'a picture of grace and moral authority' for championing democracy and opposing 'the brutal military junta that long dominated Burmese politics' (Tharoor 2017). In 1991, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize 'for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights' (The Nobel Peace Prize 1991) against the military powers that controlled Burma. She then used the prize money from her Nobel Peace Prize to create a health and education trust for the Burmese people (Miller 2001, p. 21). Suu Kyi seems clearly admirable for such morally excellent acts. Moreover, it seems that she manifests virtuous traits in these acts.

Suu Kyi has, however, recently come under moral scrutiny for not speaking out against the genocide perpetrated by her country's army against the long persecuted Rohingya people. The United Nations (2017) issued a report detailing widespread and systemic violence and rape, 'indicating the very likely commission of crimes against humanity'. Hasan (2017) describes Suu Kyi as, 'an apologist for genocide, ethnic cleansing and mass rape'. It seems to many that Suu Kyi is *no longer* a fitting target of admiration for her earlier acts. She has already had some of her honours withdrawn – such as a human rights award from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Schwartz 2018). Some have even called for her Nobel Peace Prize

to be revoked because ‘she no longer deserves it’ (Monbiot 2017). She has also had her honorary Canadian citizenship removed with one commentator saying, ‘She was a saint, now she’s not, so we’re taking back our gong’ (Potter 2018).

Given that Suu Kyi’s case is a real-life one, it seems open to different interpretations. We might think that at some point she became a different person.¹ Or we might think that Suu Kyi was never in fact admirable but rather just appeared to be. While her earlier acts gave us evidence that she manifested virtues in her acts and so was admirable for those acts, her later acts give us evidence that she never in fact possessed virtues and so was never admirable. We do not wish to argue about the correct interpretation of this case. We think the more interesting interpretation is one according to which Suu Kyi remains the same person and genuinely changes. Let us suppose, then, that at t_1 she is genuinely admirable for many morally excellent acts but that by t_2 she became an apologist for genocide, ethnic cleansing and rape. Such cases seem possible, even if they may not in fact be the case for the real-life Suu Kyi. Henceforth, we refer to this case as ‘Fallen Hero’ to make clear stipulations are being made about it. Given this understanding of her case, does she remain admirable for her earlier acts after having become an apologist for genocide, ethnic cleansing and rape?

It seems most plausible to us that she does not remain admirable for her earlier acts. This does not mean that her *earlier self* ceases to be admirable for performing those acts. Indeed, we might still admire her earlier self – just as might admire a painting before it is badly restored. We might think back to the earlier Fallen Hero with the positive feeling or judgement that is typical of admiration (Archer 2019, p. 146; Ben-Ze’ev 2001, p. 56). What we are concerned with is the admirability of her later self for her earlier acts, and it seems clear that her later self is not admirable for her earlier acts. And while we might also judge that she is not an overall admirable person because of her later acts, it seems clear that we also judge that she is no longer admirable for her earlier acts.

Why does she cease being admirable for her earlier acts? One possibility is that a person ceases being admirable for *A*-ing if she ceases to possess the traits that were essential to her being admirable for *A*-ing in the first place. After all, part of what made Fallen Hero admirable for her actions is that those actions manifested her virtuous traits. Her later acts imply that she no longer possesses those virtuous traits. Her ceasing to possess those traits may therefore explain why she ceases being admirable for her earlier acts. Call this the *trait* account of admiration over time.² We will now consider a case that undermines this account. This is the case of the ‘Athletic Hero Past his Prime’.

Consider Pelé, Brazil’s widely admired footballing hero. When he was in his prime, he performed all sorts of athletic acts for which he merited admiration. Among these was an artful flick over a defender’s head just outside

the six-yard box before he fired the ball past the goalkeeper in a 5–2 win over Sweden at the 1958 World Cup. Sigge Parling, one of his opponents in that game, said later, ‘After the fifth goal, even I wanted to cheer for him’ (Fifa.com 2010). During his career, Pelé won many awards and accolades – all of which at least pick him out as being admirable for his footballing feats – including being awarded the Ballon d’Or (the award for the world’s best player) seven times.

Pelé retired from football in 1977. Since then, he has continued to receive awards and accolades. Among many others, in 1999, he was named ‘Athlete of the Century’ by the International Olympic Committee; in 2000, he received FIFA’s Player of the Century award; and in 2013, he received FIFA’s Ballon d’Or Prix d’honneur. He is also regularly praised by others. In awarding Pelé the first Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award, Mandela (2010) said that the award is given to ‘a world athlete who exemplifies the highest virtue of sport, honour, courage, joy and perseverance’ and that Pelé is ‘an enduring model for all athletes. In fact, for all of us, to admire and emulate’.

Part of what made Pelé admirable for his footballing feats were his *athletic traits* (which includes his talents), such as his goal scoring ability, his touch, his passing ability and his ability, in the words of Johann Cruyff, to ‘surpass the bounds of logic’ (Fifa.com 2010). Because he has grown older, these traits have declined to the point that he no longer possesses them. This example cuts against the trait account according to which remaining admirable for past actions requires that one continues to possess the traits that were essential to becoming admirable for those actions. The problem with this account is that it implies that Pelé, once he loses his athletic traits, ceases being admirable for his earlier athletic feats just as Fallen Hero ceases being admirable for her earlier moral acts. But this seems counter-intuitive in Pelé’s case. It would mean that all the awards given to him, as well as all the feelings and verbal expressions of admiration by his peers and others after he lost those traits, were unmerited. And this seems to be the wrong result. It is not just that he continues to receive awards and accolades, it seems that he remains a fitting target of admiration for his earlier acts.

Perhaps it is the case that it is his earlier self – that is, Pelé when he still possessed the relevant athletic traits – that is the target of some of these awards and other expressions of admiration. But it seems that many of them target the man as he now is – namely, an old man incapable of the feats that made him an athletic icon. So it seems implausible to say that it is only his earlier self that is the target of all these varied expressions of admiration. It remains counter-intuitive that Pelé does not remain admirable for his earlier footballing feats.

The two cases we have considered so far highlight a puzzle, which we call *the puzzle of admiration over time*. Sometimes admiration persists, and sometimes admiration ceases. The Fallen Hero case suggests that admirability

may eventually cease over time. The Athletic Hero case suggests otherwise. Our judgements therefore seem to conflict. In some cases, people continue to be admirable for their past actions even when they lose the relevant traits, and in other cases, people seem to cease being admirable when they lose the relevant traits. How can we explain this?

One way would be to argue that one of the judgements is mistaken. Perhaps we should think that Fallen Hero never ceases being admirable, or perhaps we should think Pelé does in fact cease being admirable. It is possible that we could be systematically mistaken or irrational and one of the judgements is mistaken. However, rather than try to debunk one of the judgements, we will instead try to give a vindicating explanation of both judgements. We will try to account for these judgements within a unified account of admiration over time.

3. *Solution one: Moral versus non-moral admiration*

Is there something about *moral* admiration that leads people to say that admiration is no longer fitting for past actions, even though we think that admiration of past non-moral actions is fitting? Perhaps there is something significantly different about morality such that the grounds for admirability located within this normative domain differ from the grounds for admirability located in non-moral normative domains. The non-moral case suggests that a change in underlying traits does *not* make a difference to one's admirability. Because all that seems to matter is that one *once* possessed the relevant traits, this suggests that non-moral admiration involves a *diachronic* evaluation – that is, an evaluation that takes into consideration the traits that a person has possessed at any point in her life so far. The moral case suggests that a change in traits *does* make a difference to one's admirability. This suggests that moral admiration involves a *synchronic* evaluation – that is, an evaluation that takes into consideration what traits a person *now* possesses. Call this the *evaluation pluralist* account.

If the evaluation pluralist account is correct, then we have a way to resolve the conflict created by the two cases we have considered so far. It would explain why we find Fallen Hero to no longer be admirable for her earlier acts and why we find Athletic Hero to continue to be admirable for his earlier acts. Because moral admiration involves a synchronic evaluation and non-moral admiration does not, it makes sense that our evaluation of Fallen Hero is sensitive to the loss of moral virtue in a way that our evaluation Athletic Hero is not sensitive to the loss of athletic talent.

However, this account is also inadequate. There are cases of people who seem to cease being non-morally admirable, and there are cases of people who seem to continue being morally admirable despite losing the traits that made them admirable in the first place. Let us consider these cases in turn.

Sell Out Artist: Fraser is an artist who was considered by critics to be at the forefront of a counter-cultural movement at the beginning of his career. At that time, he created exciting and marvellous works. He won many awards and received admiration for his work from around the globe. Some critics singled out his aesthetic traits, such as his talent and creativity, as a source of his admirability. But over the last few years, Fraser has started producing works that seem trite and boring. He seems to have lost any talent that he once had and is no longer producing the exciting works he once did. Rather, he is producing works that aim at making him money rather than trying to inspire and marvel his audience. Some critics remark that he is undoing the credibility that he took years to build up.

Former War Hero: During the Second World War, Sofia risked her life to save thousands from Nazi death camps. She regularly did what was difficult for her to do, sacrificed her personal safety and wealth and in general went above and beyond the call of duty. She manifested virtuous traits – such as courage and beneficence – in her actions. Indeed, the fact she possessed such traits was essential to her acting as she did. After the war, she has no opportunities to express these traits for over 30 years. Because over those 30 years the traits that made her virtuous have not been used, those traits have weakened to the point that she no longer possesses them. While she was once inclined to do what was difficult for her and to sacrifice her safety and wealth, she is now no longer inclined to do more than what is required of her. Importantly, however, she has not become a vicious person; she simply lives a quiet and peaceful life.

In *Sell Out Artist*, it seems that Fraser ceases being admirable for his earlier works. This does not change the fact that his earlier self was admirable for those works. We might still think back to the ‘early’ Fraser and feel admiration for him then. But because the ‘later’ Fraser seems to ‘undo’ (in some sense) his earlier works, he no longer seems to be a fitting target of admiration for those works.³

In *Former War Hero*, it seems that Sofia remains admirable for her wartime actions despite the fact that she ceases to possess the traits that were essential to her becoming admirable. It seems relevant that Sofia has not become a vicious person. In contrast with Fraser, she has not done anything that ‘undoes’ her earlier admirable acts.

The evaluation pluralist account is unable to accommodate these further judgements. It implies that Fraser remains admirable for his earlier works despite his change in artistic character, and it implies that Sofia ceases being admirable because of her change in moral character. And yet it seems that Fraser ceases to be admirable and that Sofia continues to be admirable. In other words, it seems that *sometimes* moral admirability persists even though the traits that were essential to the person becoming admirable no longer persist, and it seems that *sometimes* non-moral admirability ceases when the person loses the relevant traits. Therefore, the evaluation pluralist

account fails. The puzzle remains: why is it that admirability sometimes persists and sometimes does not?

4. *Our solution: Admiration and defeaters*

We propose that admirability must be *undone* or *defeated* in order for a person to cease being admirable. We will propose that defeaters make a person an unfitting target of admiration for an earlier action because they imply that the person violates the *ideal* that made them admirable in the first place. The first component of this understanding, then, is that ideals ground admiration for actions. We will propose that a person becomes admirable for an action when in so acting she manifests an ideal to some extent. For example, Fallen Hero's morally excellent acts manifest an ideal of a social justice campaigner, and Athletic Hero's feats manifest an ideal of a footballer. The second component is that ideals have a temporal component with a narrative structure. We will propose that a person remains admirable to the extent that she does not violate the ideal that made her admirable in the first place, where 'violating an ideal' means that a person acts outside the range of narratives associated with an ideal. After outlining and motivating these two components, we will show how our narrative account of admiration solves the puzzle of admiration over time.

4.1. ADMIRATION AND IDEALS

To see the connection between admiration and ideals, we will first need to say more about admiration itself. We think admiration can take a variety of intentional objects, such as animals, flowers and sunsets. Our focus, though, is on agential admiration – that is, admiration directed towards a person who is capable of acting for reasons (Shoemaker 2015, p. 38), and in particular, on admiration for a person for acting in a particular way. It is therefore important to distinguish between the two intentional objects of such admiration. As with many emotions, we can distinguish such admiration's *formal* object and its *particular* object (Scarantino and de Sousa 2018; Kauppinen 2019). The former is what makes the emotion fitting, whereas the latter is the target of the emotion. With respect to admiration for a person for acting a particular way, the particular object is *the person*. That is, it is the person whom we admire for acting a particular way.

Given the apparent connection between admiration and excellent acts, we might think that *actions* are admiration's formal object. That is, whether admiration is fitting depends on the nature of the action. However, this does not seem right, at least when it comes to agential admiration. Merely doing something excellent does not make one a fitting target of admiration (Kauppinen 2019, pp. 32–33; Wolf 2016). Suppose someone performs an

excellent action accidentally. For example, a footballer may score a beautiful goal when she in fact intended to pass the ball rather than shoot. The goal itself may be admirable in the same way a beautiful sunset or cloud formation may be admirable. The player, though, is not a fitting target of admiration, as this goal is not creditable to her in any meaningful way. Similarly, someone who performs morally virtuous acts but for the wrong reasons, for example, out of a desire to impress people, is not admirable. However excellent the act may be, agential admiration would not be fitting, as the person performing the act would not be praiseworthy.

This suggests that in order for a person to be admirable for performing an action, she must have performed it intentionally and for the right reasons. If we only needed to explain how a person initially becomes admirable, this might have been an adequate account. But because we also need to explain admiration over time, this account is lacking. As we saw in Section 2, the fact that a person is admirable for an action at t_1 does not guarantee that she will be admirable for that action at t_2 .

What is needed then in order to remain admirable for our past actions? One plausible answer is that these actions must reflect something about who we are. David Shoemaker's account that admiration targets traits provides a way to make sense of this. Shoemaker (2015, p. 56) claims that, 'Agential admiration has as its fitting object character traits, evaluating them as excellent relative to some ideal.' If we think that agential admiration takes character traits as its formal object, then it makes sense to think that what is needed to remain admirable for an earlier action is continued possession of the traits that led to that action. However, as we saw in Section 2, the trait account of admiration over time cannot solve the puzzle. While this account can explain why Fallen Hero ceases to be admirable, it cannot explain why Athletic Hero remains admirable.

Antti Kauppinen's (2019) person-focused account of admiration potentially offers an answer to this question. According to Kauppinen (2019, p. 36), a person-focused attitude is one that is directed towards a person as 'an enduring constellation of traits and attitudes.' According to Kauppinen (2019, p. 32), the target of admiration, 'is a person, who is construed as leading a life manifesting (or approximating) an ideal of the person we endorse.' A natural way to extend this account to cover admirability for past actions is to say that a person remains admirable for a past action if she continues to manifest the relevant ideal of a person that she manifested when she performed that action. However, if continuing to manifest the relevant ideal necessarily involves possessing the constellation of traits and attitudes that were essential to one being admirable in the first place, then this account fails for the same reason as Shoemaker's. While it gets the right result in Fallen Hero, it gets the wrong result in Athletic Hero.

While neither of these accounts is able to solve the puzzle, both contain an idea that will be key to our solution. According to both accounts, when we

admire someone, we construe them as excellent in relation to an *ideal* – that is, we view them as manifesting an ideal to some extent.

4.2. THE NATURE OF IDEALS

According to Kimberley Brownlee (2010, p. 242), ideals ‘are models of excellence or conceptions of perfection around which we can orient our thoughts and conduct.’ Some ideals are related to social roles, such as ideals related to being a teacher (Kauppinen 2019, p. 41). Such ideals are models of excellence or perfection in particular roles. An ideal of a teacher may involve a teacher caring for her students, being patient, being hard-working, being conscientious and so on. There may in fact be a number of different ideals related to being a teacher. One ideal of a teacher might require being dedicated, hard-working and caring, whereas another ideal of a teacher might require being charismatic and inspirational.

We might worry that linking admiration to ideals makes it unlikely that anyone will ever be a fitting target of admiration. However, manifesting an ideal is something that can be done in degrees (Kauppinen 2019, p. 41). So fitting admiration need not be uncommon. On our view, the extent to which a person manifests an ideal when she acts determines the extent to which she is admirable for that action. This fits with the idea that some people can be more or less admirable than other people.

Because there are many different ideals, there is a range of different ways to manifest ideals. Consequently, there are many different ways of being admirable. Compare an ideal of being a teacher with an ideal of being a soldier. An ideal of the latter may place more importance on the virtue of courage than on the virtue of kindness or compassion. An ideal of being a teacher, on the other hand, may give more emphasis to kindness or patience.

As well as influencing which traits are prioritised, different ideals also seem to require that traits are instantiated in different ways. For example, the ideals associated with being a soldier and being a footballer both seem to involve the virtue of courage, but the relevant sense of courage differs between these ideals. A soldier may have to be willing to risk her life in order to be courageous, whereas a footballer need not do so. A footballer may only need to be willing to suffer career-ending (but not life-ending) injuries. So while ideals of both footballers and soldiers prescribe facing dangers, the dangers they prescribe are of a different kind.⁴

Given the variety of ideals, it is possible that a person manifests one ideal while failing to manifest another ideal that is relevant to her life (Kauppinen 2019, p. 41). For example, a person who is both a teacher and a parent might manifest an ideal of a teacher but might fail to manifest any ideal of a parent. Her failing as a parent need not affect the fact that she manifests an ideal of a teacher.

4.3. IDEALS AND NARRATIVES

At this stage, we take ourselves to have made a good case for the first component of our view – namely, that ideals ground agential admiration. In other words, a person becomes admirable for an action to the extent that she manifests an ideal in so acting. In order to solve the puzzle of admiration over time, we must also give an account of remaining admirable. The account we will now propose holds that ideals are associated with narratives. We will suggest that the fittingness of admiration over time depends on not ‘violating’ the particular ideal the manifestation of which makes a person admirable for her actions in the first place, where violating an ideal means that the person acts outside the range of narratives associated with an ideal.

Our starting point is David Velleman’s (1991) claim that the value of one’s overall life may be different from the total momentary value of one’s life: if we add up all the moments of well-being in two lives, they may come out equal and yet one person’s life is better overall. Consider two lives:

One life begins in the depths but takes an upward trend: a childhood of deprivation, a troubled youth, struggles and setbacks in early adulthood, followed finally by success and satisfaction in middle age and a peaceful retirement. Another life begins at the heights but slides downhill: a blissful childhood and youth, precocious triumphs and rewards in early adulthood, followed by a midlife strewn with disasters that lead to misery in old age. Surely, we can imagine two such lives as containing equal sums of momentary well being. Your retirement is as blessed in one life as your childhood is in the other; your nonage is as blighted in one life as your dotage is in the other. (Velleman 1991, pp. 49–50)

It seems that the first life is better overall than the second life. The explanation for this is that a life’s value is not additive – that is, it is not just about adding up individual moments of well-being. Rather, a life’s value depends on its overall shape, where that means it fits a particular narrative. Lives that start well but end badly are not as good as lives that start badly but end well, as the example suggests. This is because the latter sorts of lives are better *stories* than the former sorts of lives.

Velleman’s view will serve as a useful point of comparison in outlining our account of remaining admirable. One point of similarity is that Velleman stresses the distinction between well-being at a particular time and a life’s overall value, while we distinguish between becoming and remaining admirable. In other words, we both allow that the target phenomenon may apply to a person in the past (well-being and being admirable), but that the question we are interested in is about the person’s *present* instantiation of the phenomenon. As we noted earlier, when a person ceases being admirable, it remains the case that her earlier self was admirable (we cannot change the past after all). But a person’s behaviour over time can change what those earlier actions mean for

her present admirability for those earlier actions. As Velleman (1991, pp. 52–53) says about the value of a life, ‘later events are thought to alter the meaning of earlier events, thereby altering their contribution to the value of one’s life’.

The key point of similarity is that we think that the fittingness of admiration over time depends on how one’s life goes in the same kind of way that Velleman proposes that the value of one’s life depends on the narrative shape of one’s overall life (according to which good lives end well, and bad lives end badly). This is not to say that there is a connection between the value of one’s life and whether one is admirable. A person could remain admirable despite her life not going well. For example, the ideal of the struggling artist who sacrifices her happiness and even her health for the sake of her art involves the artist’s life not going well. And neither does it mean that remaining admirable depends on the same kind of narrative shape that the value of a life does. Remaining admirable is less about living a certain sort of life and rather about *not* living a certain sort of life. In our view, a person remains a fitting target of admiration for an action to the extent that she does not violate the relevant ideals, where violating an ideal means that a person acts outside the range of narratives associated with an ideal.⁵

Why think that narratives are associated with ideals? We suggest that it is because we use ideals as guides to action. According to Linda Zagzebski (2017), admiration involves a desire to emulate the target of admiration. When we admire a person, we try to be like them. If our admiration is fitting, then our target must be worthy of emulation. When a person is not worthy of emulation in a particular respect, she is not admirable in that respect. Consider *Fallen Hero*. While her earlier self is someone we would say was worthy of emulation, her later self is clearly not worthy of emulation. This accords with our judgement that her later self is not admirable for her earlier actions. Because she ceases to meet the ideal of a social justice campaigner, she ceases being admirable.

However, ideals considered at a particular time only provide a partial guide to action. We do not just need to know how to act in particular moments but also how to excel in particular roles over time. Building on the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, Paul Ricoeur (1992) argues that a narrative understanding of ideals is needed to make sense of the claim that ideals can provide guidance on how to live. In his words:

If stories told offer so many bases for moral judgement, is this not because this judgement needs the art of storytelling in order to schematize, as it were, its aim? Beyond the rules, norms, obligations, and legislating that constitute what can be called morality, there is, as we shall state then, the aim of the true life, which MacIntyre, echoing Aristotle, places at the summit of the hierarchy of the levels of praxis. Now if this aim is to become a vision, it cannot help but be depicted in the narratives through which we try out different courses of action by playing, in the strong sense of the word, with competing possibilities. (1992, p. 164, fn. 31)

We take from this that it is the narrative structure of ideals that make them useful for planning our future actions and so useful for figuring out how we are going to live. When we emulate someone that we admire, we are in effect trying to manifest the ideal that we have identified them as having manifested. By acknowledging that narratives are associated with ideals, we can see why ideals give us both guidance for what to do at particular times and for what to do over time. They tell us not only what we ought to do now but also what we ought to do later. Because we use ideals to guide us, we should therefore think that they are associated with narratives.

4.4. VIOLATING IDEALS

We have argued that ideals are associated with narratives. We will now explain what we take violating an ideal to mean.

The most obvious way a person does not violate an ideal is if she continues to manifest the ideal over time. Consider Full Hero. This is a person who maximally manifests an ideal (e.g., of a social justice campaigner) and then continues to maximally manifest that ideal throughout her entire life. Full Hero becomes as admirable as a person can and then continues to be fully admirable throughout her life. Call this the ideal narrative associated with an ideal. It is a role-specific story in which a person not only maximally manifests an ideal at one time but also continues to manifest that ideal to the same extent over time.

While a person must manifest an ideal at a particular time to some extent to become admirable, a person need not continue to manifest an ideal over time to continue being admirable. This is because ideals are associated with a range of narratives and not just an ideal narrative (there may even be multiple ideal narratives for a particular ideal). To see this, consider Retired Hero. This is a person who is admirable for promoting social justice but then retires from public life. While she does not continue to manifest the ideal narrative of a campaigner for social justice, she does not act in a way that *violates* the ideal she earlier manifested. We might say that she *infringes* the ideal because it seems that Retired Hero is less admirable than Full Hero. But it does not seem that Retired Hero ceases to be admirable.

The reason that ideals are associated with a range of narratives is related to the motivational component of admiration. As we discussed in Section 4.3, those who are admirable are worthy of emulation. While Retired Hero is worthy of emulation for her excellent acts, she is not as worthy of emulation as Full Hero (at least qua social justice campaigner) for her excellent acts. While both perform (we can suppose) equally excellent actions, Full Hero is more worthy of emulation because she continues to maximally manifest the ideal of a social justice campaigner. Even so, Retired Hero is still a good exemplar of a social justice campaigner. While Retired

Hero's story would not end in the best way for a social justice campaigner – she would not be fighting for social justice until her very last breath as Full Hero does – it would not be a bad end to her story qua social justice campaigner. It does not end badly because looking at Retired Hero's full story as a social justice campaigner still gives us good guidance on how to be a social justice campaigner at one time and over time.

The same is not true, though, for Fallen Hero. While her earlier self is a good exemplar, she – with her actions in her role as a social justice campaigner taken as a whole – is not a good example to follow. Her later actions (condoning genocide) violate the ideal of social justice campaigner because they render her present self not worthy of emulation in her role as a social justice campaigner. As discussed, when we admire someone for what she does, we seek not only guidance on how to act at particular times but also over time. Part of what makes her admirable is that she is worthy of emulation, and whether she continues to be admirable depends in part on whether she continues to be worthy of emulation. As we have argued, because of this link between admiration and emulation, it matters how a person's story turns out. Fallen Hero's story goes badly because of how she changes, and so she violates the ideal of a social justice campaigner.

Let us now consider Former War Hero. She continues to be admirable despite losing the traits that were essential to her being admirable in the first place. If her actions had not expressed those virtuous traits, then she would not have manifested an ideal of a war hero. While she may not continue to manifest this ideal over time (because she loses the relevant traits), she still does not act in a way that makes her not worthy of emulation for her earlier acts. It is true that she is less admirable than Retired Hero. While Retired Hero no longer manifests the ideal of a social justice campaigner, she continues to possess the traits that were essential to her meeting this ideal. A person is more worthy of emulation if she continues to possess the traits that were essential to her meeting the relevant ideal in the first place. But losing those traits, as is the case with Former War Hero, does not necessarily mean that one ceases to be worthy of emulation. Because Former War Hero does not become morally vicious – that is, she does not become akin to Fallen Hero – she is still worthy of emulation to some extent. Again, she is not now as worthy of emulation for her earlier actions as Retired Hero (and so not as worthy as Full Hero), but she has not yet crossed the line into being unworthy of admiration.

Narratives associated with moral ideals range from continuing to manifest the relevant ideal (as is the case with Full Hero) to no longer manifesting the relevant ideal because one ceases to possess the relevant essential traits (as is the case with Former War Hero). It seems that the former is the upper limit and the latter is the lower limit of narratives associated with moral ideals. Fallen Hero's narrative is below the lower limit – she does more than just fail to manifest the relevant ideal (more on this shortly) – so she counts as

violating the ideal. Importantly, the fact that a person *fails* to manifest the ideal after initially manifesting it does not necessarily affect whether she violates the ideal. Former War Hero, for example, fails to manifest the ideal after the war because her actions no longer manifest the relevant virtuous traits (because she loses them). While she fails to manifest an ideal of war hero later in life, she is still a good (if far from the best) example to follow.

Let us now consider Athletic Hero. Nothing about his later actions or loss of ability seems to cut against him remaining admirable for his footballing feats. We can explain this as follows. It is within the range of acceptable narratives associated with the athletic ideals that one can stop being excellent at sports and yet still remain admirable. This is after all what normally happens with footballers. They play for 10–15 years, and then they retire. It may be true that Full Athletic Hero (a person just like Full Hero but who maximally manifests an athletic ideal rather than a moral one) is more admirable than Athletic Hero, but that does not mean that Athletic Hero ceases being admirable for his earlier feats. One difference between Former War Hero and Athletic Hero is that it seems that Athletic Hero's story is closer to the relevant ideal narrative than Former War Hero's. Even though Full Athletic Hero may be more admirable than Athletic Hero, it does not seem that athletes lose as much admirability by losing their traits. This is perhaps because it would be asking too much if the narratives closer to the ideal narrative of an athletic hero involved always being at the top of one's game throughout one's life.

This is not to say that an athlete necessarily remains admirable once she becomes admirable. If Athletic Hero had become a terrible footballer while he was active as a footballer – perhaps he stopped training as much and got out of shape – it seems possible that this could have undermined his admirability for his earlier athletic feats. This is the way in which an athlete can 'fall' comparable with how a moral hero (such as Fallen Hero) can fall. So becoming terrible while active violates the range of acceptable narratives, whereas it is an acceptable narrative for athletes to retire and then be bad at their sport. Athletic Hero might fail to manifest the ideal – for example, by playing the game badly at a non-professional level – but that does not mean that he violates the ideal. Again, failure to manifest an ideal is not sufficient for violating that ideal. Because Athletic Hero retired before he became a bad footballer, his later actions are in line with the range of narratives associated with being an athletic hero. Hence, his admirability is not defeated.

As we have seen, there are not exact parallels between the narratives associated with ideals in different normative domains. We should therefore be careful not to generalise our results about ideals in one normative domain to another normative domain. Indeed, a feature of our narrative account of admiration is that it is able to accommodate the differences between the various ideals that ground admiration. The trait account attempted to fit

all normative domains under one model – namely, the loss of traits. The evaluation pluralist account did slightly better by distinguishing between the moral and non-moral domains, but even this is not enough to deal with the different characteristics of each normative domain.⁶ This will become even more clear after we consider our final case, *Sell Out Artist*, as we will see differences between the artistic and the athletic as well as connections between the artistic and the moral.

Sell Out Artist ceases to be admirable for his earlier excellent artworks. The explanation for this is that he has acted outside the range of narratives associated with the ideal (i.e., violated the ideal) of being an artist. While there are many paths that an artist can take to develop herself, we expect an artist not to come to oppose the content and meaning of her old work. And we propose that part of acting in line with the range of acceptable narratives associated with the relevant artistic ideal is not coming to oppose the content and meaning of one's old work. Note three things. First, this only applies to a type of artist that creates artworks that have meaning. Some art only involves expressions of skill and talent and is thus judged on its formal features alone. For example, a painting of the countryside or some freeform jazz need not have any meaning. This kind of art is similar in kind to athletic feats. Second, an artist need not approve of the content. She may have developed such that she does not feel the same about her earlier work, but that is not the same as coming to oppose its content and meaning. Third, this means that an artist who does not create sell out artworks but who simply changes her (artistic) character such that she opposes the content and meaning of her old work is no longer admirable for that work (where this sense of opposition need not be public or overt or even privately acknowledged by the artist; it need only be that her values and cares are such that she is opposed to her old work). When we consider her full history as a particular kind of artist, she would not be worthy of emulation as that kind of artist, and so she is now no longer admirable for her earlier work. In short, the fact that she opposes her old work (in the specific sense we are discussing) is not a good ending to her story as an artist. It is not the kind of story that will serve as a good guide for us if we are trying to manifest the relevant artistic ideals.

Our discussion highlights a way in which certain artistic ideals are different from athletic ones: it does not matter what an athlete's stance is towards her past acts, but it sometimes matters what an artist's stance is towards her past work. It also highlights a way in which artistic ideals are similar to moral ones. Just as *Fallen Hero's* story as a moral figure continues, *Sell Out Artist's* story as an artist also continues. And just as we do not want our artistic hero's character to change such that she comes to oppose her earlier aesthetically excellent works, we also do not want our moral hero's character to change such that she comes to oppose her earlier morally excellent acts. If a moral hero or an artist changed in this way, she would be a bad guide to meeting the relevant moral or artistic ideal. So with both *Sell Our*

Artist and Fallen Hero, the actions that defeat their admirability are those that result in their respective characters changing in key respects.⁷ These actions, as well as any subsequent sell out art and immoral actions, are all defeaters for their earlier admirability for their actions.

4.5. SOLVING THE PUZZLE

We now have an explanation for why our admiration sometimes persists and sometimes does not. Remaining admirable depends on not violating the ideal that one manifested in order to become admirable. Fallen Hero violates the ideal of a social justice campaigner when she replaces her earlier admirable traits with vicious ones. Athletic Hero does not violate the ideal of a footballer because his later actions are within the acceptable range of narratives associated with that ideal. While Former War Hero becomes less admirable than she once was, she remains admirable to some extent because even though she loses her virtuous traits she does not acquire opposing vicious traits. Sell Out Artist stops being admirable for his earlier work because he violates an ideal of an artist when he replaces his admirable artistic traits with vicious artistic traits. Our account accommodates our judgements about each of these cases. It also gets the right result in the other cases that we have discussed. However, our narrative account is not just motivated by getting the right results in these cases. It is also motivated by the connections between admiration, ideals, narratives and motivation. When we admire a person for acting a particular way, we desire to emulate them. We do not just try to emulate how she acts at a particular time but how she acts over time. So it not only matters that she manifests an ideal at a particular time but also how she subsequently lives with respect to that ideal – that is, it matters that she lives within the range of acceptable narratives associated with that ideal.

5. *Objection: Abandoned ideals*

On our account of admiration, a person becomes admirable for an action to the extent that she manifests an ideal in so acting. A person remains admirable for an action to the extent that she does not violate the ideal. A person violates an ideal when she acts in ways that are outside the range of narratives associated with that ideal. Our focus thus far has been on providing an account that solves the puzzle of admiration over time. Of course, questions remain. In this section, we consider an objection.⁸

Bob Dylan was a folk musician and a leading figure in the American Folk Revival in the early 1960s. However, on his 1965 album *Bringing it All Back Home*, he ‘went electric’: half the album included songs with an electric band. This, together with his subsequent electric tour, caused outrage among some of his fans. Let us suppose that Dylan violated the ideal of a folk

musician by going electric. Even so, it still seems that Dylan is admirable for his pre-electric music. It may therefore seem that our narrative account of admiration over time cannot accommodate cases like this.

This kind of case provides an opportunity to clarify an important aspect of our account. While it may be true that Dylan violated the range of narratives associated with *being a folk musician*, it is also true that he all along manifested an overarching and more general ideal of a *musician*, one which involves developing and transforming over time. We propose that what makes one ideal (such as that of a folk musician) nested within an overarching ideal (such as that of a musician) is that the actions that are constitutive of each ideal converge in many respects. Most of what differentiates ideals of being a folk musician with ideals of being a musician are likely the former's focus on folk music, perhaps together with commitments and values concerning certain ways of life, but they will converge on many aspects related to music in general.

Compare this with Fallen Hero. When she ceases manifesting the ideal of social justice campaigner, she does not continue to manifest the ideal of a moral hero. While she manifested that overarching and more general ideal earlier in life, the kinds of actions she performed that resulted in her ceasing to live any acceptable narrative associated with ideals of social justice campaigner are also the kinds of actions that would result in her ceasing to live any acceptable narrative associated with ideals of a moral hero. In other words, the actions that defeat her admirability for her actions qua social justice campaigner also serve to defeat her admirability for her actions qua moral hero. With respect to Dylan, the actions that defeat his admirability for his music qua folk musician do not defeat his admirability for his music qua musician.

6. Conclusion

This paper has investigated the fittingness conditions on admiration over time. We have argued that there is puzzle about admiration over time because some cases suggest that a person's admirability for her actions does not change over time, whereas other cases suggest that a person's admirability for her actions does change over time. We then considered and rejected both the trait account and the evaluation pluralist account of admiration. Finally, we outlined our own proposed solution according to which certain actions act as defeaters to a person's admirability. On our view, a person becomes admirable for an action to the extent that she manifests an ideal. A person remains admirable for an action to the extent that she acts in ways that do not violate the range of acceptable narratives associated with that ideal. Defeaters are those actions (or omissions) that violate these acceptable narratives.

While we have not discussed moral responsibility and praiseworthiness in this paper, our arguments have implications for both. At the very least, it seems that our arguments show that a person may be praiseworthy for *A*-ing at t_1 but then may cease being praiseworthy for *A*-ing at t_2 . For those who take praiseworthiness to be coextensive with being morally responsible – such that a person who is morally responsible for *A*-ing is either praiseworthy or blameworthy for *A*-ing – our arguments also show that we can cease being morally responsible. This is in line with arguments made by Shoemaker (2012) and Andrew Khoury and Benjamin Matheson (2018). However, our arguments also undermine the positive accounts of responsibility over time those authors have proposed. They both appeal to versions of what we called the trait view – that is, the view that explains responsibility over time in terms of continued possession of the psychological attitudes that were essential to one being responsible in the first place.⁹ Our cases suggest that responsibility over time is more complicated than these authors have realised. While we have only considered cases that touch on praiseworthiness over time, future investigation might reveal that analogous cases also show that blameworthiness over time is not as straightforward as these authors suggest.

Finally, while some have investigated the diachronic conditions of responsibility and blameworthiness, most work on emotions has until now focused on synchronic fittingness conditions.¹⁰ Given the importance of the emotions for our moral and social lives, this a troubling oversight. We have focused on admiration in this paper, but we believe that this puzzle may generalise to other emotions. Going forward, we think that ethicists and philosophers of emotion must expand their narrow focus on the conditions on becoming a fitting target of an emotion. Only then will we be closer to an adequate understanding of the role and function of the emotions in our lives.¹¹

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Open access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

Alfred Archer
Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands

Benjamin Matheson
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich, Germany

NOTES

¹ Unless she had a radical and sudden change of character, this is not compatible with a plausible account of (numerical) personal identity over time. This is because all such accounts

must also allow for the possibility of complete change of character over a long enough period. See Matheson (2019a) and Khoury and Matheson (2018) for further discussion of this point.

² This account is implicit in Shoemaker (2012, 2015) and Khoury and Matheson (2018).

³ One might question whether this case conflates the aesthetic with the moral. Perhaps it is the case that Sell Out Artist remains admirable for his earlier work but has failed morally by pursuing money instead of art. Let us assume that Sell Out Artist has failed morally by pursuing money instead of art. While we have argued that someone's admirability for her art is often independent of her admirability for her moral actions (Archer and Matheson 2019), there are at least some cases where this independence does not hold. According to Bartel (2019), we often find an artwork more aesthetically valuable when we learn about details of an artist's life. The struggling artist, for example, may express deeper meaning and authenticity in her work because of her struggles in life. So, Bartel argues, we should allow that the artist's life can negatively affect her work too. Given this, even if Sell Out Artist has morally failed by creating sell out art, this failure can still affect his aesthetic admirability for his work. We might also imagine that he needed the money for a morally neutral or praiseworthy cause. While he would not have done anything morally wrong by selling out, his admirability for his work ceases.

⁴ Because we focus on ideals rather than virtues, we avoid making controversial commitments about the nature of the virtues. According to one view of the virtues, possessing a virtue involves possessing a trait that will manifest itself across a range of different situations, not just in relation to a particular role (e.g., MacIntyre 2007, p. 205). Similarly, according to the unity of the virtues thesis, defended by Socrates in Plato's *Protagoras*, one cannot possess one virtue without possessing all the virtues. We do not intend to take a stand on these issues. It is enough for our purposes that someone can be admirable for an action when she manifests an ideal attached to a particular role even if she does not count as possessing a virtue in this strong sense.

⁵ A dissimilarity between our accounts is that while for Velleman the value of a life depends on how one's overall life story goes, remaining admirable does not depend on such an overall life narrative. Rather, it depends on the narratives connected to a particular ideal, which often stem from social roles. Because a person can have multiple social roles, she can manifest or fail to manifest several ideals at once.

⁶ Ideals within one normative domain may also differ from other ideals in that domain, so we may also need to be careful about generalising from one case (e.g., a social justice campaigner) to another (e.g., a war hero). We will set aside this point in what follows.

⁷ We do not take a stand on whether the change occurs prior to or simultaneously with their later acts (creating sell out art or acting immorally).

⁸ Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing us to consider this kind of case.

⁹ The puzzle also seems to cut against the narrative view of responsibility over time suggested by Matheson (2014, 2019b).

¹⁰ For an exception, see Na'aman (forthcoming).

¹¹ Thanks to audiences at the Stockholm Summer Workshop in 2018 and the Sixth Annual OZSW Conference at the University of Twente. For written comments, thanks to Robert Hartman, Andrew Khoury, Jenny McKay and Huub Brouwer. Thanks especially to two anonymous referees for this journal. This work was supported by the NWO (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek; The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research; Grant Numbers 016.Veni.174.104 and 040.11.614) and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung).

REFERENCES

- Archer, A. (2019). 'Admiration and Motivation,' *Emotion Review* 11(2), pp. 140–150. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073918787235>.

- Archer, A. and Matheson, B. (2019). 'When Artists Fall: Honoring and Admiring the Immoral,' *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 5(2), pp. 246–265.
- Bartel, C. (2019). 'Ordinary Monsters: Ethical Criticism and the Lives of Artists,' *Contemporary Aesthetics* 17.
- Ben-Ze'ev, A. (2001). *The Subtlety of Emotions*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Brownlee, K. (2010). 'Moral Aspirations and Ideals,' *Utilitas* 22(3), pp. 241–257.
- Fifa.com (2010). 'What They Said About Pele'. URL: <http://www.fifa.com/live-scores/news/y=2010/m=10/news=what-they-said-about-pele-1321917.html>. Accessed on 15/05/2018
- Hasan, M. (2017). 'Burmese Nobel Peace Prize Winner Aung San Suu Kyi Turned into Apologist for Genocide against Muslims'. The Intercept, URL: <https://theintercept.com/2017/04/13/burmese-nobel-prize-winner-aung-san-suu-kyi-has-turned-into-an-apologist-for-genocide-against-muslims/>
- Kauppinen, A. (2019). 'Ideals and Idols: On the Nature and Appropriateness of Agential Admiration,' in A. Archer and A. Grahlé (eds) *The Moral Psychology of Admiration*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Khoury, A. and Matheson, B. (2018). 'Is Blameworthiness Forever?' *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 4(2), pp. 204–224.
- MacIntyre, A. (2007). *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd edn. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Mandela, N. (2010). 'Speech by Nelson Mandela at the Inaugural Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award,' Monaco 2000. https://web.archive.org/web/20160424043821/http://db.nelsonmandela.org/speeches/pub_view.asp?pg=item&ItemID=NMS1148. Accessed on 15/05/2018
- Matheson, B. (2019a). 'Should Aung San Suu Kyi's Nobel Peace Prize Be Revoked?' Bij Nader Inzien. <https://bijnaderinzien.org/2019/03/18/should-aung-san-suu-kyis-nobel-peace-prize-be-revoked/>
- Matheson, B. (2019b). 'Towards a Structural Ownership Condition on Moral Responsibility,' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 49(4), pp. 458–480.
- Matheson, B. (2014). 'Compatibilism and Personal Identity,' *Philosophical Studies* 170(2), pp. 317–333.
- Miller, J. E. (2001). *Who's Who in Contemporary Women's Writing*. London: Routledge.
- Monbiot, G. (2017). 'Take Away Aung San Suu Kyi's Nobel Peace Prize. She No Longer Deserves It.' *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/sep/05/rohingya-aung-san-suu-kyi-nobel-peace-prize-rohingya-myanmar>. Accessed on 15/05/2018
- Na'aman, O. (forthcoming) 'The Rationality of Emotional Change: Toward a Process View.' *Nous*
- Potter, A. (2018). 'Jettisoning Honorary Citizens Who Disappoint Us Is Not the Answer.' *The National Post*. <https://nationalpost.com/opinion/andrew-potter-jettisoning-honorary-citizens-who-disappoint-us-is-not-the-answer>. Accessed on 29/11/2018
- Ricoeur, P. (1992). *Oneself as Another*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Scarantino, A. and de Sousa, R. (2018). 'Emotion', in E. N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/emotion/>.
- Schwartz, M. (2018). U.S. Holocaust Museum Revokes Award to Aung San Suu Kyi. The New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/07/world/asia/aung-san-suu-kyi-holocaust-rohingya.html>. Accessed on 15/05/2018.
- Shoemaker, D. (2012). 'Responsibility Without Identity,' *The Harvard Review of Philosophy* 18 (1), pp. 109–132.
- Shoemaker, D. (2015). *Responsibility From the Margins*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Tharoor, I. (2017). 'The Shameful Silence of Aung San Suu Kyi,' *The Washington Post*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/09/06/the-shameful-silence-of-aung-san-suu-kyi/>
- The Nobel Peace Prize (1991) 'Aung San Suu Kyi'. https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1991/. Accessed on 15/05/2018
- United Nations (2017) 'Resolution Adopted by the Human Rights Council on 5 December 2017'. www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/.../A_HRC_RES_S-27_1_EN.docx. Accessed on 15/05/2018
- Velleman, J. D. (1991). Well-Being and Time. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 72(1), 48–77.
- Wolf, S. (2016). 'Aesthetic Responsibility,' *The Amherst Lecture in Philosophy* 11(2016), pp. 1–25 <<http://www.amherstlecture.org/wolf2016/>>.
- Zagzebski, L. (2017). *Exemplarist Moral Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.