

Admiration and Motivation

Abstract: What is the motivational profile of admiration? In this paper I will investigate what form of connection between admiration and motivation there may be good reason to accept. A number of philosophers have advocated a connection between admiration and motivation to emulate. I will start by examining this view. I will present three problems for this view. Before suggesting an expanded account of the connection between admiration and motivation according to which admiration involves motivation to promote the value that is judged to be present in the object of admiration. Finally I will examine the implications of this account for the use of admiration in education.

Introduction

What is the motivational profile of admiration? According to some philosophers, the typical motivation that arises from admiration is a desire to emulate. Linda Zagzebski (2010: 54), for example, claims that, “the feeling of admiration is a kind of attraction that carries with it the impetus to imitate.” Similarly, Mark Schroder (2010: 42) claims that admiration, “is the kind of state to motivate you to emulate the people you admire, insofar as you are able.” This claim was also popular amongst philosophers of the enlightenment. Moses Mendelssohn argued that admiring character traits produces the wish, “to be equally capable of such a sublime disposition” and as a result produces a “desire to emulate,” (Lessing and Mendelssohn 1972: 168). It is not just philosophers who find this view appealing. In his literary essay on the subject of admiration the American author W. D. Wetherell (2010: xiii) claims: “Admiration leads to emulation, which is anything but passive; the mentors described in this book, almost every one of them, stirred me to action, if only in my thoughts and dreams.” Similarly, the Scottish author and Chartist reformer Samuel Smiles (1871: 44) claimed that, “Admiration of great men, living or dead, naturally evokes imitation of them in a greater or less degree.”

Despite the popularity of this view, there has been very little attempt by philosophers to evaluate the plausibility of this claim. This is unfortunate, as not everyone finds this view plausible.

Gotthold Lessing (Lessing and Mendelssohn 1972: 59) for example claimed that admiration is a *paralyzing* emotion rather than a motivating one.

The issue of whether admiration leads to a desire to emulate is important for several reasons. First, it is important for the project of classifying different emotions. One way in which certain emotions can be distinguished from others is by their motivational profile. For example, Aaron Ben-Ze'ev (2000: 69) claims that the motivational profile is crucial in distinguishing pity and compassion, as “readiness to assist the object is much more evident in compassion.” In the same way, clarifying the motivational profile of admiration may help in the task of distinguishing admiration from other related emotions.

In addition, this issue has important practical implications for how we should utilise admiration in education. Admiration has been claimed by Zagzebski and Mendelssohn to have an important role to play in education (particularly moral education) and development. It is no coincidence that both also saw a close connection between admiration and a desire to emulate. In order to be capable of properly assessing the role that admiration should play in education, we need to first get a proper understanding of the motivational profile of admiration.

Finally, the issue of whether admiration is connected to a desire to emulate has consequences for philosophical debates in value theory. The Fitting Attitude Account of value is one that has received a great deal of attention in recent years. According to this view, something is of value if and only if there are reasons to have a certain pro-attitude towards it (See the formulation given

in Rowland 2015: 1455). This view has been claimed to face a problem, as there appear to be cases where we have good reasons to have pro-attitudes towards things that are not valuable (Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen (2004). According to one recent attempt to defend The Fitting Attitude Account, this problem can be solved in part by appealing to the claim that admiration is linked to a desire to emulate (Schroeder 2010). The question of whether admiration is connected to a desire to emulate will be important for determining whether or not this approach to solving the problem is successful.

The aim of this paper will be to investigate this issue. I will start, in §1, by investigating Linda Zagzebski's arguments in favour of The Emulation View. These arguments are based on appeals to phenomenological and empirical evidence. I will then, in §2 provide three objections to The Emulation View. First, I will argue that it struggles to accommodate the fact that we can experience admiration for non-human animals and objects. Second, I will argue that it struggles to accommodate typical cases of admiration for other people. Finally, I will argue that it fails to explain the plurality of responses that can be appropriate when one admires someone or something. These problems give us good reason to search for an alternative account of the connection between admiration and motivation. I will turn to this task in §3, where I will argue that admiration typically involves a desire to promote the values that they appraise the object of admiration to possess. This view of admiration presents an expanded picture of the connection between admiration and motivation. Rather than viewing a desire to emulate as fundamental to admiration, we should instead view it as one of several appropriate responses. I will argue that this account of the connection is able to accommodate the problems facing The Emulation View and fits more easily with both the empirical evidence and our intuitive thoughts about the kinds of motivation we associate with admiration. Finally I will briefly consider the implications of my

view for education, arguing that it can provide a fuller account of the motivational uses of admiration in education.

Before I begin, it is worth making explicit two assumptions I will be making in this paper. First, I will follow Ben-Ze'ev (2000: 56) and Zagzebski (2006: 60) in assuming that admiration is properly classed as an emotion. However, I will not follow Sara Algoe and Jonathan Haidt (2009: 106) in distinguishing between the emotion of elevation (roughly moral admiration) and admiration (all other forms). My reason for this is that I intend to contribute to the philosophical discussion on the concept of admiration, which makes no distinction between the two. The philosophers whose views I am discussing in this paper all use the term 'admiration' rather than 'elevation' to refer to the moral form of admiration. As Zagzebski (2017: 41) explains her position: "'admiration' is a perfectly good term for our emotional responses to both morally and non-morally exemplary persons." In order to avoid making this discussion unnecessarily confusing for the reader, I will follow this usage of the term admiration. We might worry that using admiration in this broader way could obscure a potential difference between moral and non-moral admiration. To avoid this worry I will ensure that the arguments I make apply to both moral and non-moral forms of admiration.¹

1. The Emulation View

How should we understand the claim that admiration leads to a desire to emulate? The first kind of connection we might posit between admiration and emulation is a necessary one. This seems to be the kind of connection that Zagzebski (2012: 89) has in mind in the following: "To admire

¹ Those who prefer Algoe and Haidt's terminology can simply follow the following translation guide. In my usage: 'admiration' includes both 'elevation' and 'admiration' on Algoe and Haidt's terminology, while 'moral admiration' is equivalent to Algoe and Haidt's use of 'elevation' and 'non-moral admiration' is equivalent to Algoe and Haidt's use of 'admiration'.

someone is to see the person as attractive in the sense of a model or an exemplar, and to feel a desire to imitate the person.” Zagzebski’s claim here is that to admire someone is to both see them as a model and to desire to emulate them. The reason for this is a desire to emulate is, according to Zagzebski, part of what the emotion of admiration involves. As she puts it, “The power to move us *is present* in the emotion of admiration,” (2006: 20) It is present because this is a key part of what admiration is. Zagzebski (2015a: 209) claims that one of the “fundamental features” of admiration is that it, “gives rise to the motive to emulate the admired person in the way in which she is admired.”²

What exactly is meant by emulation here? Zagzebski (2017: 43) explains that admiring someone, “gives rise to the motive to emulate the admired person *in the way she is admired,*” (emphasis added). If I admire a kind person for her kindness then, according to Zagzebski, this will give rise to a desire to become kind myself. The desire to emulate then is a desire to possess for ourselves the features we admire in the other person. Zagzebski supports her view with an appeal to phenomenology. In her description of her admiration for Sir Robert Scott’s expedition to the South Pole, she claims that although she has no overriding desire to emulate him, “I do find that my admiration for his sense of dignity *includes* an impulse to have that sense myself,” (2012: 89) Emphasis added.³ Zagzebski’s point is that when we examine what it is like to experience admiration we find that a desire to emulate, albeit a defeasible one, is part of this experience.

In addition, to Zagzebski’s phenomenological claims, this view is also supported by empirical psychological research into admiration. For example, Immordino-Yang et al. (2009; 2010)

² Irwin (2015) raises concerns about Zagzebski’s attempt to base moral judgements on our emotions of admiration. I will not be addressing this issue here.

³ See also Zagzebski (2017 p.20).

conducted a study in which participants were exposed to stories about the virtuous acts of others. The participants then spontaneously brought up in subsequent discussion the desire to be a morally better person and perform noble actions. This led Immordino-Yang and Sylvan (2010: 110) to conclude in their analysis of the implications of the findings that admiration is a “profoundly motivating” emotion. Similarly, a set of studies conducted by Algoe and Haidt (2009) asked participants to report their experiences of admiration and were then asked about the motivational impact of this emotion. The results of the experiments showed a positive relationship between (both moral and non-moral) admiration and a desire to emulate.⁴

These studies, together with Zagzebski’s phenomenological claims, seem to give us good reason to accept Zagzebski’s initial claim of a necessary connection between admiration and a desire to emulate. However, in more recent work, Zagzebski refines her earlier position by denying that a desire to emulate should be viewed as a *necessary* part of admiration. Instead, Zagzebski claims that admiration involves finding the object of admiration as attractive in some way and “the way in which the object is attractive *typically* gives rise to the urge to imitate or emulate the object of emulation *if possible*,” (2015b: 254) emphasis added. This position places two restrictions on the connection between admiration and emulation. First, the motivation to emulate is only a *typical* rather than a *necessary* response. We should not expect all instances of admiration to involve a desire to emulate. In fact Zagzebski (2017: 50-90) says that deviant cases of admiration may become distorted and lead to an envious desire to “see the admired person deprived of her admired features.”

⁴ For further empirical support for this connection see Aquino et al (2011), Cox (2010), Freeman et al. (2009), Landis et al. (2009), Schnall et al (2010), Thrash and Elliot (2004) and Vianello et al. (2010).

Second, Zagzebski claims that we would not expect admiration to lead to a desire to emulate when emulation is impossible. According to Zagzebski (2017: 39-40), a desire to emulate is only a feature of admiration for “acquired excellences”, those that are achieved through hard work, and it is not a feature of admiration for “natural talent”, those talents that one is born with. To support this claim she gives the example of her own admiration of any man who can sing the last verse of “Walk the Line”. Her admiration here is combined with a doubt that there is any way for her to emulate those who sing in such a deep voice, which she takes to be an ability people are either born with or not (2017: 38). This contrasts with her admiration for someone’s generosity of spirit. This is something that can be emulated and also gives rise to the desire to emulate. Zagzebski (2017: 35-40) proposes then that a desire to emulate is a feature of admiration for acquired excellences but not of admiration for natural talents. The Emulation View should be understood as positing a connection between typical experiences of admiration for acquired excellences.

Given the examples Zagzebski gives, we might be tempted to understand her as making a distinction between moral and non-moral virtues. However, this is not how she intends the distinction. As she points out, “the main division in admirable traits is not the division between intellectual and moral traits. It is the division between the natural and acquired,” (2017: 39). The important feature here is not the domain of excellence, be in moral or otherwise, but whether the talent being admired is in born or acquired.

It is also important to note that the claim that Zagzebski is defending, though, is not simply an empirical one. After all, Zagzebski (2015a: 209) maintains that a desire to emulate is one of the

“fundamental features” of admiration.⁵ How should we understand this claim given that Zagzebski thinks that a desire to emulate is not a necessary feature of admiration? The most natural way to understand this claim is as saying that this is the motivation that is a feature of prototypical cases of admiration. As Aaron Ben-Ze’ev (2000: 6) has argued, it is a mistake to try and provide clear necessary and sufficient conditions for emotional categories. Rather, inclusion in an emotional category is determined by the degree of similarity to prototypical instances of the emotion. In giving an account of an emotional category then we should seek to identify features that prototypical instances of the emotion will possess. Adopting this prototype approach to emotional categorisation enables the following plausible interpretation of The Emulation View:

The Emulation View: In prototypical cases of admiration for acquired talents, an agent who experiences admiration will be motivated to try to emulate the object of their admiration in the way in which she is admired.

This formulation is not committed to the claim that a desire to emulate is a necessary feature of admiration, as it is only making a claim about prototypical instances of the emotion. Moreover, it is only making a claim about cases of admiration for acquired talents. However, is doing more than making an empirical claim about a statistical connection between admiration and motivation to emulate. Rather, it is claiming that the cases of admiration that should be considered prototypical, involve a desire to emulate.

2. Objections to The Emulation View

In this section I will introduce three objections to The Emulation View, before going on to provide an alternative account in §3.

⁵ Irwin (2015) raises concerns about Zagzebski’s attempt to base moral judgements on our emotions of admiration. I will not be addressing this issue here.

A. The Objects of Admiration

The first problem with Zagzebski's view is that it seems to ignore an important feature of admiration, that the objects of admiration are not limited to human beings or even to animals. As Immanuel Kant (1788: 102) puts the point, "[admiration] can pertain to things eg. Sky-high mountains, the magnitude, multitude and expanse of the heavenly bodies, the strength and speed of many animals, etc." Kant's point appears entirely accurate, as well as admiring people we can also admire mountains, sunsets and works of art. We can admire a swan's grace, a stag's majesty and the collective workings of an ant colony. This experience is not an atypical case of admiration, as Emily Brady (2013: 44) claims we often experience, "admiration for the size or awesomeness of nature," while William MacDougal (1921: 96) claims that, "It is obviously true that we admire natural objects, a beautiful flower or landscape, or a shell, or the perfect structure of an animal and its nice adaptation to its mode of life." These observations allow us to form a quick objection to Zagzebski's view. If the objects of admiration can be non-human and even inanimate then it seems to make little sense to say that a fundamental feature of admiration is a desire to emulate the object of admiration. After all, it is far from clear what a desire to emulate the magnitude of the heavenly bodies or the collective workings of an ant colony would involve.

As it stands though, there is a simple response to give to this point. The Emulation View only covers cases of admiration for acquired talents. The cases I have discussed above are not instances of admiration for acquired talents, so it seems that these cases raise no problem for The Emulation View.

However, while it is right to say that these cases do not serve as counterexamples to The Emulation View, they do create a different kind of problem for the view. What these examples show is that the range of instances in which admiration is not typically accompanied by a desire to emulate is much broader than we might have thought from the discussion in §1. It is not only

admiration for natural talents possessed by people that will not be accompanied by a desire to emulate but also any kind of admiration for non-human animals or objects. This claim does not threaten the plausibility of The Emulation View as a claim about admiration for people's acquired talents. However, it does put pressure on Zagzebski's claim that this is a fundamental feature of admiration. At best it looks like a feature that is typical of a small subset of cases of admiration, rather than a fundamental feature of the emotion itself. This may not be a problem for Zagzebski's goal of constructing a moral theory with admiration at its core. It does though, give us reason to look elsewhere for an account of the typical motivational profile of admiration.

This, though, is only the case if we accept that admiration can appropriately target non-human animals and objects. One response to this claim would be to say that in these cases the objects of our admiration is the creator of the objects. This response works most clearly in the case of works of art. Perhaps when we admire the playfulness and simplicity of form in Henri Matisse's *The Fall of Icarus*, what we are really admiring is not the *The Fall of Icarus* but Matisse's talent. This would allow us to say that admiring an artwork could be linked to motivation to emulate the artist. Unfortunately, this does not get the supporter of Zagzebski's view very far. This response may work for artworks but tells us nothing about the other objects of admiration that were suggested. This response could, of course, be extended if we are willing to grant the existence of a divine creator responsible for creating the mountain, the sunset, the stag and the ant colony. Indeed, MacDougal (1921: 96) claims that this admiration for nature does implicitly involve the personification of the power that brought it into being in the form of a divine creator. Those who accept the existence of such a creator can claim that when they appear to be admiring a mountain they are actually admiring the work of the creator who they desire to emulate.

This response faces three problems. First, it is not obvious that this account provides a plausible account of the admiration that theists experience towards non-human life-forms and inanimate

objects. While some of the experiences of admiration that a theist encounters may plausibly be seen as admiring the work of God, it is far from obvious that all are. Even if we think that this is always how a theist's admiration should be understood, the claim that a fundamental feature of this admiration is a motivation to emulate the creator also seems dubious. There does not seem any reason to think that whenever a theist admires the magnitude of the universe she will be motivated to emulate God. Finally, and most importantly, this response appears most implausible when we consider an atheist's experience of admiration. It seems perfectly possible for someone who does not believe in the existence of a divine creator to admire non-human life forms and inanimate objects. Yet if we accept the theistic response to the problem then it looks like this kind of admiration should be impossible.

Another response to this objection would be to claim that the term admiration is ambiguous between two distinct emotions. We have already seen one way in which this could be done, through defending a distinction between moral admiration (or elevation) and non-moral admiration. If we held that The Emulation View only holds for moral admiration and not for non-moral admiration then there is no problem here, as it is presumably only non-moral admiration that we would hold towards non-human animals and objects. However, this response does not divide up admiration in the right place for The Emulation View. As we have seen, Zagzebski is clear that this view is about *acquired excellences* and that moral excellences are not the only form of acquired excellence. Someone can develop their intellectual, artistic or sporting abilities as well as their moral virtues. Dividing admiration into moral and non-moral forms will not get the right results for The Emulation View.

Admiration could also be divided into talents that an agent is responsible for and those that no agent is responsible for. The first kind of admiration would target people's acquired excellences

(be they moral or non-moral), while the second would target people's natural talents as well as admiration for non-human animals and objects. There are various ways in which such a distinction could be defended. It could be argued that these emotions have different functions, one serving a personal aspiration function in motivating people to improve and the other a primarily social function for highlighting the presence of something of value. Relatedly, it could be claimed that the two forms of admiration have different neighbouring emotions. For example, it could be claimed that the first may share a great deal in common with a positive or emulative form of the envy, whilst the second has more in common with awe.⁶

Any such account would have to be fully developed before it can be adequately assessed. It would then, be unfair to dismiss this approach entirely. However, it is worth noting one that any such approach owes an explanation as to why the word 'admiration' is used for both person-directed admiration and non-person directed admiration. Unless such an explanation can be given then this response will fall foul of a methodological principle called Occam's Eraser. Paul Ziff (1960: 44) explains this principle in the following way: "There is no point in multiplying dictionary entries beyond necessity (that is the point of Occam's eraser." The point of this principle is that unless we have good reason to think that a word is ambiguous then we should seek to give a non-ambiguous account of it. When it comes to admiration then, unless we are given good reason to think that this word refers to two distinct emotions then we should prefer a non-ambiguous definition.

This is far from a devastating objection to the approach and there may well be good explanations that can be given here. Nevertheless I think it does give us good reason at this stage to explore

⁶ See Protasi (2016) for a discussion of emulative envy and Kristjánsson (2017) for a discussion of awe.

whether other ways of accounting for the motivational profile of admiration in a unified way are available. I will argue, in §3, that the account I will defend does not posit such an ambiguity and so it should be preferred to The Emulation View.

In this section I have outlined the first objection that may be raised against The Emulation View. I argued that admiration can be directed to non-human animals and objects. This by itself is not a problem for The Emulation View. However, it does mean that The Emulation View only applies to a narrow subset of instances of admiration. This gives us reason to look elsewhere for an account of the typical motivational profile of admiration.

B. The Argument From Counterexamples

The second problem for The Emulation View is that many paradigmatic experiences of person directed admiration do not involve a desire to emulate. As we have already seen, Zagzebski accepts that feelings of admiration may not lead to a desire to emulate when the admirer judges herself incapable of emulating the object of her admiration. This kind of counterexample led to Zagzebski claiming that a motivation to emulate is not a necessary component of admiration but only part of typical experiences of admiration. We might think that this weakened version of Zagzebski's view is not vulnerable to counterexamples. After all, any single example will not be enough to show that motivation to emulate is not a feature of typical cases of admiration.

The starting point for my argument will be to point out that there are a range of cases where would not expect admiration to be accompanied by a desire to emulate. One kind of case is admiration for a way of life quite different from one's own whilst being perfectly happy with the life one is leading. John Skorupski, for example, (2010: 288) claims that:

I can find a way of life admirable without desiring to lead a life like that. I may admire the ease and grace of an athlete or violinist, the dedication of a scientist, the vision and courage of a politician, without desiring to emulate them. I may be perfectly content to get on with my own comfortable life.

St Augustine (1961 [397]: 84) makes a similar observation about admiration in his *Confessions*:

Though I liked actors and openly admired them, I should not have wanted their fame and popularity for myself. I would rather have been entirely unknown than known in the way that they were known. I would rather have been hated than loved as they were.

This seems to be a recognisable experience. We can admire the work of an actor, musician or sport star without wishing to become one ourselves.⁷

This observation by itself does not provide problems for The Emulation View, as these experiences of admiration can simply be ruled as being cases of admiration for natural talents rather than admiration for acquired virtue. However, this response fails to fully respond to the worry. While many of these examples, like the virtuoso violinist for example, may be cases of admiration for natural talents, other examples can be given that do not fit this category. For example, someone might admire moral saints without feeling any desire to become a moral saint herself. Take Susan Wolf for example, who argues that a life of moral perfection, “does not constitute a model of personal well-being toward which it would be particularly rational or good or desirable for a human being to strive,” (1982 p.419). Wolf has no desire to be a moral saint, yet this is perfectly compatible with admiring moral saints. Moreover, this is not because this is

⁷ Rob Compaijen (2017) provides similar examples. Compaijen argues that these kinds of examples give us reason to think that admiration is not sufficient for taking someone to be an exemplar. Compaijen then argues that it is recognizing someone as an exemplar that is key to emulation. I will not address this point here but it is worth noting that it is compatible with everything I will say about the motivational profile of admiration.

admiration for a natural talent, at least if we accept that sainthood is an acquired trait rather than a natural talent. This gives us reason to think that we can admire acquired excellences without having any desire to emulate them.

A similar example can be given for a non-moral acquired excellence. Suppose that Mark and Peter are brothers who have run marathons together since they were teenagers. Mark runs marathons for a hobby. He always manages to complete the race but never comes close to winning. Peter, on the other hand, is a competitive runner who often manages to win the race. Mark has to make some sacrifices for his hobby, getting up early to train and missing out on some social occasions the night before a race. These pale into insignificance in comparison to Peter, though, who must stick completely to a gruelling dietary and training regime. Whenever Peter wins a race Mark is full of admiration for his athletic ability. However, despite the fact that Mark knows he would be capable of achieving the same if he dedicated himself in the same way, he feels no desire to do so. Rather he is satisfied with the decision he has made not to dedicate himself completely to running. This is another example of someone who admires an acquired talent in another but has no desire to emulate him.

As with the previous objection, this is not a decisive objection to The Emulation View. It could be argued in response that these are not *typical* cases of admiration for acquired virtues.⁸ Given that The Emulation View only covered typical cases this response allows the supporter of such a view to avoid this objection. This response though is somewhat unsatisfying, as there does not seem to be anything atypical about these cases of admiration. It is disappointing then that The

⁸ Another response that could be made to these examples is that what is being admired is not the achievement itself but an underlying character trait such as dedication in the pursuit of a goal. While Mark may not desire to become as good a runner as Peter, he may desire to be capable of such dedication. However, this response requires us to view Mark's admiration as only targeting the dedication and not the running ability, which strikes me as an unnecessarily restrictive view of how to understand Mark's admiration.

Emulation Account is pushed to classify these cases of admiration as atypical. We have reason then, to prefer an account of the connection between admiration and motivation that does not have to class these cases of admiration as atypical.

C. *The Many Responses To Admiration*

The final problem for Zagzebski's view is that it seems to ignore the fact that forming a desire to emulate the object of admiration is far from the only motivational response that we associate with admiration. For example, we also associate admiration with applause. Adam Smith (1759/2007 Ch.4 Section 1) described applause as "the natural expression," of admiration. Similarly, Algoe and Haidt's (2009) empirical study found that admiration motivated people to acknowledge the performance, enhance the reputation of the object of admiration and to praise the object of admiration. Similarly, David Velleman (2009: 42) suggests that in addition to bringing about a disposition to emulate the person being admired, admiration also disposes one, "to defer to him and to approve of his words and actions."

Another response that often accompanies the admiration of a person is a desire to affiliate with that person and there is empirical evidence to suggest that this is a common reaction to admiration (eg. Schindler et al 2015 and Van de Ven 2017). We might also expect an admirer of a person to praise the object of their admiration and extol the virtues of the admired person to others. When we admire the beauty of an artwork we may be moved to seek out similar works in the future. Admiring a singer may move us to seek out their latest album. Admiring a politician may move us to campaign on her behalf. Admiring a beautiful landscape that is under threat from commercial development may move someone to become active in campaigning to protect it. For example, in Fiona Reynold's *The Fight for Beauty* (2016: 7) she describes how William Wordsworth's admiration for the beauty of the English Lake District led to his motivation to fight to protect it from commercial interests. These are all entirely recognisable motivational

responses to admiration, though none of them can be classed as motivation to emulate the object of admiration.

A supporter of The Emulation View could claim that these are simply contingent responses to motivation. This though, does not do justice to the centrality of these motivational responses. Moreover, depending on the circumstances, being motivated to react in one of the above ways may be a more typical response than forming a desire to emulate the object of our admiration. Suppose I admire George Eliot but know that I could never write a novel like *Middlemarch*. In this case extolling the virtues of the novel to my friends and family members seems more appropriate than forming a desire to write a similar novel. Similarly, suppose I admire the work of a principled, passionate and astute politician while judging that I would have no talent for politics. In this case it seems more appropriate to help her campaign in some way rather than to desire to be a principled, passionate and astute politician myself. What all this tells us is that forming a desire to emulate the person we admire is not always the most appropriate response to admiration. Often there will be other equally or more appropriate responses.

This does not by itself show that a desire to emulate is not a fundamental part of admiration. It could be that there are many different appropriate responses to admiration that are all equally fundamental. If this were the case, then it would be right to say that a desire to emulate is a fundamental feature of admiration. However, if we can find a feature of admiration that is capable of explaining why all of these responses appear to be appropriate reactions to experiencing admiration then this alternative view can reasonably be thought to offer a more plausible account of the fundamental motivational profile of admiration.⁹

⁹ Such an investigation may not be necessary to achieve the purposes Zagzebski (2017) intends The Emulation View to achieve in her book, namely to develop a moral theory in which

3. The Value Promotion Account

I have raised three objections to The Emulation View. These problems may not by themselves give us conclusive reason to reject this account. However, if we can find an alternative account that can retain what is attractive about The Emulation View while avoiding these problems then we will have good reason to prefer that alternative account. In this section I will provide such an account.

The starting point for my proposal is suggested by Adam Smith (1759/ 2007 I.i.4.3), who says: “Approbation heightened by wonder and surprise, constitutes the sentiment which is properly called admiration.” Smith is not alone in suggesting a link between admiration and approval. Charles Darwin (1872/ 1998: 269) claimed that admiration is “surprise associated with some pleasure and a sense of approval.” This suggestion that admiration involves approbation or approval of the object being admired provides a useful starting point for thinking about the connection between admiration and motivation. Smith’s claim picks out a central feature of admiration. When we consider typical instances of admiration like our admiration for saints or heroes, film stars or great works of art of literature, these all involve an approval of the person or object being admired. Approval then seems to be a core feature of prototypical cases of admiration.

This approval seems plausibly understood as a form of positive evaluation of the object being admired. The idea that emotions involve appraisals of some kind is a popular one amongst philosophers of emotion. As Michael Brady (2013: 13) points out, “Emotions [...] involve an

admiration for moral exemplars plays a foundational role. However, it is important for my goal of trying to provide an account of the motivational profile of admiration.

appraisal or assessment of a situation.” The claim that is uncontroversial. To fear something is to appraise it as dangerous, while to feel pride is to appraise oneself as having achieved something. What is controversial is the issue of how exactly the appraisals involved in emotions are to be understood. According to Cognitivists (eg. Nussbaum 2001 and Solomon 1976), these appraisals should be viewed as judgements, others hold that these appraisals should be viewed as perceptions (eg. Döring 2003, Goldie 2000 and Prinz 2004) and these appraisals may also be viewed as ‘concerned construals’ (eg. Roberts 1988). On Zagzebski’s own account, emotions involve both a perception of value and a characteristic feel (2003). When we experience admiration then, we see the object of our admiration as admirable (Zagzebski 2017: 33). The differences between these different accounts are important but for my purposes, though, it is enough to note that emotions typically involve appraisals and leave the precise nature of these appraisals to one side.

Not only does it seem plausible to think that emotions generally involve appraisal, it seems particularly compelling in the case of admiration. When we admire a dancer’s grace or a hero’s courage, we are making a positive evaluation of their grace and courage. Without such a positive evaluation, it would seem contradictory to claim that these were instances of admiration. It is unsurprising then, that Aaron Ben-Ze’ev (2000: 56) claims that admiration involves, “A highly positive evaluation of someone,” while William Lyons (1980: 90) claims that it involves, “An evaluation of their object which can be classed as a pro-evaluation or approval.”

To summarize then I propose the following account of a fundamental feature of admiration:

Admiration and Value: If an agent admires someone or something then they positively evaluate that person or object.

I am not claiming this to be a complete account of the evaluative component of admiration. More work would need to be done to distinguish the evaluation involved in admiration from the related emotions of adoration, love, awe and reverence.¹⁰ What I am claiming, though, is that this is a paradigmatic (and perhaps even necessary) feature of admiration. Moreover, it is one that Zagzebski (2017: 33) would endorse, given that she holds the emotion of admiration to involve a positive evaluation of the object being admired.

This aspect of the judgement involved in admiration serves as the basis for my alternative account of the link between admiration and motivation. Given that admiration involves a judgement of value, the right link to motivation is to a desire to promote the value or values that are the focus of the admiration. My account then is as follows:

The Value Promotion View: In prototypical cases of admiration, an agent who experiences admiration will be motivated to promote the value(s) that she admires in the object of their admiration.

It is worth clarifying one aspect of this view before proceeding. The Value Promotion View holds that admiration will lead people to be motivated to promote the value she admires in the object of admiration. This does not mean though, that an admirer will be motivated to *maximise* that value. For example, one might think that there may be situations in which the value of honesty could best be promoted by being dishonest oneself. Perhaps a business ethics professor could best promote the value of honesty by making up a study that claims honesty is the most profitable strategy for business leaders. In this case we might think The Value Promotion View is committed to saying that this is what someone who had admired someone's honesty would be

¹⁰ One suggestion in the literature of the distinctive judgement involved in admiration is that the value possessed by the object of admiration is rare (See Forester 1982 p.102). Another suggestion is that admiration involves a judgement of the objects superiority to the subject in respect to the relevant value (See Schindler et al 2013 p.89).

motivated to do. However, this would only be the case if we assume a maximising approach to value promotion. We might equally hold that this kind of case would not really count as promoting the value of honesty. The Value Promotion View is neutral as to whether such a case would count as promoting the value of honesty, so is not committed to saying that this is the motivation that would result in this case.

This account differs from The Emulation View in several ways. First, it offers an account of the motivational profile of admiration that covers a wider range of cases of admiration. While The Emulation View covers only instances of admiration for acquired excellences, The Value Promotion View also provides an account of the typical motivational responses to admiration for natural talents and for admiration for non-human animals and objects. Second, The Value Promotion view is also wider in another way, as it includes a wider range of motivational responses to admiration, rather than restricting itself only to a desire to emulate.

However, this account shares with The Emulation View the view that admiration will often lead to a desire to emulate. This view of the connection between admiration and motivation can give a clear account of why, in certain situations, we might expect an admirer to form a desire to emulate the object of their admiration. An appropriate response to contemplating those features of a person that we view as valuable is to consider whether we could possess those same features. When the answer to this question is positive then one way of promoting the values that we admire in the object of admiration is to form a desire to emulate the person. If I admire someone for her kindness then I may well be motivated to perform similar acts of kindness myself. The reason for this is that it seems plausible to think that if I judge some feature of a person to be valuable, then it will often be appropriate to form a desire to possess that feature

myself. This is because value and reasons for action are intimately connected. If something is valuable then there is often reason to bring it about.¹¹

Importantly, though, this view of the connection between admiration and emulation is not committed to the claim that admiration *paradigmatically* leads to a desire to emulate. The reason for this is that someone can judge that some feature of a person or object is valuable without judging that it would be valuable for herself to possess that feature. Even if someone judges that it would be valuable to possess that feature then she may also judge that any attempt to acquire it would be unsuccessful.¹² Someone may even judge a feature to be valuable and possible for her to possess but also judge that there are more effective ways in which she can promote the same value. In all of these cases the agent judges that there is some feature of the object of admiration is valuable but that she does not have reason to try to attain it for herself (or if she does have some reason then this reason is defeated by other reasons).¹³ In such cases, we would not expect the admirer to be motivated to emulate the object of admiration.

This account then, fits more easily with the phenomenological evidence examined in §2. In cases where the admiring agent is judging some feature to be valuable but not one that she has most reason to try to attain for herself we would not expect her to be motivated to pursue it. This is a problem for The Emulation Account, given that it is committed to the claim that in prototypical

¹¹ This statement is acceptable to both teleological or buck-passing accounts of value, as both agree that when something is valuable there is reason to bring it about. (See Scanlon 1998 Ch. 2 for an explanation of the differences between these two accounts).

¹² Cf. Williams (1995 p. 190).

¹³ We might think that internalists are committed to the view that if an agent judges that she has some *pro tanto* reason to perform some action then she will necessarily be motivated to some extent to perform that action. However, as I argue elsewhere [Author's Citation Removed] this is not a plausible way of viewing Internalism, which should be understood as a view about all things considered normative judgements.

cases of admiration, a desire to emulate would exist. The Value Promotional Account on the other hand, allows for a wider range of prototypical responses. Admiration for a moral saint or a more committed marathon runner which is not accompanied by a desire to emulate need not be classified as an atypical instance of admiration for an acquired excellence. Instead The Value Promotion View would hold that the admirer will be motivated to promote the values being admired in other ways. For instance the admirer may promote these values by applauding the runner's performance thereby encouraging her to continue in his training.

This view of the motivational profile of admiration then is also capable of explaining why other responses to admiration can be just as paradigmatic as a desire to emulate. There are after all many ways to promote values. We can seek to promote a value in our own person or character, in which case a desire to emulate the object of admiration would be an appropriate response to admiration. However, there are other ways of promoting something that is valuable that do not involve promoting it in our own person. Rather than trying to promote some valuable characteristic in ourselves, we might instead try to promote it in someone else. As discussed above, rather than trying to become a great novelist myself, my admiration of George Eliot may motivate me to encourage my friends and family to read her work. This may be a more fruitful way to promote the aesthetic value of literature than engaging in the hopeless task of attempting to write great or even acceptable literature myself.

In addition, The Value Promotion View has no problem accommodating admiration for non-human animals and objects because unlike The Emulation View, it does not hold that a desire to emulate is a fundamental feature of admiration. The Value Promotion View is compatible with the object of admiration being non-human. The Emulation View struggled to accommodate these cases of admiration, as it is unclear what it would mean to emulate the magnitude of the

heavenly bodies or the collective workings of an ant colony. It seems implausible then to say that admiration will involve a desire to emulate in these cases. However, The Value Promotion View faces no such problems here, as it can allow for other forms of motivation in these cases.

Admiring the collective workings of an ant colony, may motivate me to encourage others to engage in an appreciation of the wonders of nature. Similarly admiring the magnitude of the heavenly bodies may lead me to try and convey a sense of the wonder they can invoke to others. In both cases, the motivation is one that promotes what I find valuable in the object of my admiration. The fact that The Value Promotion View is able to accommodate admiration for non-human objects means that this is able to present a more unified picture of the motivational profile of admiration than The Emulation View.

The final advantage for The Value Promotion account arises from a careful examination of the empirical literature on admiration. In §1 we saw that a number of empirical studies have found evidence to support the claim that admiration often leads to a desire to emulate. However, other empirical evidence supports a less optimistic view of the link between admiration and emulation. A series of studies by Niels van de Ven, Marcel Zeelenberg and Rik Peters (2011) found no evidence of a link between admiration and motivation to emulate. In a series of studies, students were prompted with emotions and then asked or tested for motivation levels. They found that benign envy (envy that produces a levelling up motivation) was positively correlated to increased motivation to improve oneself while admiration and malicious envy (envy that produces a levelling down motivation), on the other hand, were not. These findings, the researchers suggest, supports the hypothesis that, “envy motivates while admiration equals admitting defeat,” (van de Ven et al., 2011: 790)

We might think that given that this study found no correlation between admiration and motivation to emulate, it grounds a straightforward objection to The Emulation Account. This study though, appears to be something of an outlier. Indeed, van de Ven (2017), one of the study's authors, has recently argued that there is a link between admiration and motivation to emulate and that his earlier conclusion was mistaken. Interestingly though, van de Ven (2017: 197) claims that a possible reason why his earlier study may have failed to find a link between admiration and emulation is that it focused only on narrow and specific tests of motivation, such as the number of hours students intended to study in the coming semester. In contrast, studies that found a connection between admiration and a desire to emulate asked broader questions. For example the study by Schindler et al. (2015) asked participants whether they would wish to accomplish similar things to the object of their admiration in areas that they deem important.

Van de Ven (2017: 197) offers two possible explanations for the different findings generated by broad and narrow questions. First, admiration may motivate people to pursue more long-term goals while envy motivates people more in the short term. Second, while envy may motivate people to copy the object of their envy, admiration may motivate people to engage in a broader search for ways to improve in domains the admirer finds important. These suggestions are supported by a recent unpublished study by Blatz et al, (MS) who found that benign envy motivates people to copy the envied person and achieve short-term and specific goals, whereas admiration motivates people to achieve more long-term and abstract goals.

These findings present a problem for The Emulation View, as it appears that admiration does not typically lead to a motivation to copy the object of admiration. Rather it seems as if the motivational role of admiration is not limited to emulation but extends, as The Value Promotion View holds, to broader and more far-reaching ways in which we might seek to promote the values we identify in the objects of our admiration. In some cases, we may be able to promote

these values by simply copying the object of our admiration. In others cases though, discovering the best ways to promote these values will take more time and careful consideration. Simply emulating the object of our admiration may not be an option or may not be the best way to promote what we value.

I have argued that The Value Promotion View has a number of advantages over The Emulation View. First, The Value Promotion View fits more easily with the phenomenological evidence examined in §2 by allowing for a wider range of prototypical motivational responses. Second, this view can easily explain is also capable of explaining why other responses to admiration can be just as paradigmatic as a desire to emulate. Third, this view can easily accommodate admiration for non-human objects. Finally, this view seems to fit more comfortably with the details of the empirical evidence about the motivational profile of admiration.

However, it could be objected that this account tells us nothing distinctive about admiration. Instead, the motivation this account holds to be distinctive of admiration could be claimed to simply result from the positive evaluation embedded in admiration. This by itself does not explain why a desire to emulate will be an appropriate response to admiration. If we accept some form of Normative Judgement Internalism, according to which judgements about normative reasons are necessarily connected to motivation amongst rational agents, then a clear connection emerges.¹⁴ If we accept this view then our judgements about our reasons for action will be necessarily motivating insofar as we are rational. Even Normative Judgement Externalists would accept that judgements about normative reason will *generally* (as opposed to *necessarily*) motivate.¹⁵

¹⁴ This view developed from the discussion of Moral Judgement Internalism, the view that moral judgements are necessarily motivating. As Wedgwood (2007 pp.23-25) argues, the view is more plausible when applied to all things considered normative judgements. For further arguments in favour of understanding judgement internalism in this way see Archer (2016; 2017).

¹⁵ See, for example, Svavarsdottir (1999 pp. 205-206).

This is enough to ground the existence of a connection between admiration and a desire to emulate. The worry here is that it is a judgement of an action or person as valuable that brings about a desire to promote the value they judge to be present in the object of admiration. This is important, as this judgement can come apart from admiration. Someone can, for example, judge an athletic achievement as highly valuable without feeling any admiration for the action or the person performing it. It might be objected that we would expect The Value Promotion would also apply to this judgement, as a positive evaluation consists in a desire to promote the values judged to be present in the object judged positively.

In response to this problem it should be noted that a similar objection might be raised against many accounts of the motivational impact of emotions. For example, we might take fear to motivate withdrawal from a stimulus judged to be dangerous. This is a comprehensible account of the motivational profile of fear. Note though, that we might take the judgement of something as dangerous to be sufficient to motivate withdrawal by itself. We might think that this leaves little motivational role for fear to play over and above the judgement of danger. This though would be a mistake, as fear will motivate more forcibly than a simple judgement of danger. The same point is true about admiration compared to a purely cognitive judgement of value. While a judgement of value on its own may motivate someone to promote that value, the motivation will likely be stronger when someone experiences admiration. This is supported by Algoe and Haidt's (2009: 116-117) findings that non-admiration acts as a mediator on skill appraisals and moral admiration acts as a partial mediator on prosocial motivations. This provides us with reason to think that while a judgement of value by itself may motivate, the motivational power of admiration is not fully explained by this judgement.

4. Implications for Education

Before I conclude I want to briefly outline the implications of accepting my account for the question of how admiration should be utilised in education. We might think that rejecting the existence of a direct connection between admiration and emulation would provide reason to be less optimistic about the benefits of admiration in education. However, this thought is unfounded. I have not claimed that admiration is not linked in any way to emulation. I have defended a broader account of the motivational profile of admiration. On my account, admiration leads to a desire to promote the values we admire in the object of our admiration. One way in which this can be done is through emulation but this is far from the only way. My account then is perfectly compatible with the view that the educational power of admiration comes from its ability to bring about a desire to emulate exemplars.

However, unlike The Emulation View, The Value Promotion View can offer a fuller account of the motivational benefits of admiration in education. According to The Value Promotion View there are a number of different motivational responses to experiencing admiration for someone. Admiration may motivate people to engage in the other appropriate responses to value, such as applauding and supporting the object of admiration and encouraging others to engage in similar acts. This has an important role in education if we think that education should involve more than just teaching us how to develop virtues within ourselves but also how to encourage the development of virtues in others.

In addition, The Value Promotion View also provides a potential role for admiration to play in motivating us to respond appropriately to exemplars who we are unable to emulate. It may be that there are some people who are simply unsuited to some forms of exemplarity. Some people may simply lack sufficient the virtues needed to become a saint and may also have little hope of developing them. Even if they could develop the right virtues some people may be dedicating

their life to other noble projects such as becoming a moral hero, a great artist or a groundbreaking scientist. If we accept that there are a variety of worthy pursuits one may dedicate one's life towards and a variety of ways in which a life can be considered excellent then part of a fully rounded education will be learning to respond appropriately to those who we cannot emulate. By providing a broader account of the motivational profile, The Value Promotion View can show how admiration can play an important role in motivating us to respond appropriately to these exemplars.

Concluding Remarks

I have investigated the connection between admiration and motivation. I started by outlining The Emulation View, according to which a desire to emulate is a paradigmatic feature part of admiration and the arguments used to support it. I argued that examining all of the available phenomenological and empirical evidence fails to provide any support for the claim that a desire to emulate is a paradigmatic part of admiration. I then raised three problems against this view. First, I argued that the fact that we can admire non-human animals and objects is problematic, as it shows that The Emulation View only covers a narrow range of cases of admiration. Second, I provided a number of counterexamples that cast doubt on the view. Finally, I argued that The Emulation View fails to explain the plurality of motivational responses to admiration.

I then provided an expanded view of the motivational profile according to which admiration paradigmatically involves a desire to promote the value that is admired in the object of admiration. On this view a desire to emulate is one of several ways in which admiration typically motivates. I argued that this view is one that fits more comfortably with both the empirical and phenomenological evidence and avoids the objections facing The Emulation View. Finally, I

briefly explained how this view can provide a broader account of the motivational benefits of admiration in education.¹⁶

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