Fear and Affective Injustice

Alfred Archer and Georgina Mills[1]

How might people be wronged in relation to fear? Recently philosophers have begun to investigate the idea that there may be distinctly *affective* forms of injustice (Archer & Mills 2019; Archer & Matheson 2022; Gallegos 2022; Srinivasan 2018; Whitney 2018). Until now, though, the literature on affective injustice has mostly focused on the emotion of anger. Similarly, while philosophers have investigated both ethical (Döring 2020; Harbin 2023) and political (Ahmed 2004; Nussbaum 2019) questions related to fear, and the connection between fear and epistemic injustice (Puddifoot & Trakas 2023), this literature has not yet drawn on the literature of affective injustice to investigate these issues.

We will investigate how fear can be a site of affective injustice. We will outline three forms of affective injustice involving fear. We begin by providing an overview of the existing literature on affective injustice. We will then argue that the unfair dismissal of people's fears can constitute a form of affective injustice. Next, we will argue that being made to live in fear can also constitute a form of affective injustice. Finally, we will outline the last form of fear-related affective injustice, which is being the target of unwarranted fear. In exploring these various forms of fear-related affective injustice we will highlight more general features of affective injustice that have hitherto been underacknowledged.

Before we begin, we will briefly explain how we understand fear. Fear is an emotion that involves the anticipation of a situation that we judge as a threat to ourselves or those we care about (Ben-Ze'ev 2000, 479; Goffin 2023, 2634; Harbin 2023, Ch.1). Fear is an intensely unpleasant emotion (Ahmed 2006, 65) which focuses our attention on the source of the threat and motivates us to act to protect ourselves against the threat, for instance through avoidance or escape (Harbin 2023, Ch.1; Lerner & Keltner 2001; Öhman & Mineka 2001).

While much more could be said about the nature of fear, this basic understanding will suffice for our purposes.

Affective Injustice: The Story so Far

The basic idea underlying affective injustice is that people can be wronged in relation to their feelings and emotions. As we have suggested elsewhere, affective injustice can be understood broadly as, "an injustice faced by someone specifically in their capacity as an affective being" (Archer & Mills 2019, 76). In this section, we explain the various forms of affective injustice outlined in the literature and Francisco Gallegos' unified theory of affective justice.

One form affective injustice may take is the denial of uptake to people's emotions. As Shiloh Whitney (2018) argues, denying uptake to the anger of members of oppressed groups constitutes an affective injustice. For example, when men respond to a woman's anger by viewing the woman as hysterical, the men are focussing on what the anger reveals about the mental stability of the woman rather than on the object of the woman's anger. This treats this anger "as if it is not about anything; as if it is a reflection of psycho-physical events within the angry person only" (Whitney 2018, 489). This involves a refusal to be affectively moved by the anger and to allow it to influence one's evaluations of the object of the women's anger. Whitney argues that this constitutes an affective injustice by drawing a parallel to epistemic injustice. An epistemic injustice is, according to Miranda Fricker (2007, 1) "a wrong done to someone specifically in "their capacity as a knower".

Whitney argues that while epistemic injustice involves giving less weight than is due to people's beliefs, "affective injustice damages the weight afforded one's feelings" (2018, 495). As Whitney explains, the relevant kind of weight here is "affective force", it is a failure to be appropriately moved or affected by the feelings of others (Whitney 2018, 495). Whitney draws on Iris Marion Young's five faces of oppression to outline three different kinds of

affective injustice. Affective marginalization involves the exclusion of oppressed people from the shared world of affect circulation. This involves the "reduction of the person's affects to nonsense or to 'mere' affect" (Whitney 2018, 495). Affective exploitation involves the extraction of affective labour from less powerful people by the powerful. In addition, victims of oppression are also subject to affective projection, in which powerful people project their feelings onto the oppressed who are "marked as [bodies] available for dumping unwanted affective waste" (Whitney 2018, 508). This places significant burdens on oppressed people which Whitney describes as "uniquely affective form of violence" (Whitney 2018, 504).

Another form of affective injustice identified in the literature involves imposing emotional obstacles that certain people must overcome before being taken seriously. As Amia Srinivasan argues, the demand that victims of oppression let go of their anger before people are willing to listen to them about their oppression generates a normative conflict for members of oppressed groups. The anger that those face oppression feel in response to being oppressed is apt, meaning that it involves an accurate evaluation that they are being wronged. However, given how others will respond to this anger, expressing it may be counterproductive for the goals of combatting this oppression. For example, Black Americans have faced repeated calls to first let go of their anger before speaking out against racism, as expressing their racism makes White Americans uncomfortable and may even lead to an increase in racist hostility.[2] Srinivasan says that this is an "affective injustice" as victims of oppression are forced into a situation where they must choose between an apt emotional response and an emotional response that will best advance their interests.[3]

The final form of affective injustice involves powerful groups imposing their emotional norms and standards on the less powerful. Alfred Archer and Benjamin Matheson (2022; 2023) call this form of injustice 'emotional imperialism'. This may involve a form of cultural imperialism involving emotional norms. As Iris Marion Young defines cultural

imperialism, it exists when, "the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one's own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it out as the Other" (1990, 58-59). With emotional imperialism, this involves a dominant group imposing their view of the appropriate emotional responses to certain situations on oppressed groups and casting the emotional responses of the oppressed that do not fit these norms as deviant and inferior (Archer and Matheson 2022 772). For example, the enforcement of norms of honour and admiration for the British Army in the United Kingdom through 'poppy policing', the demand that all public figures wear a poppy to express admiration for the British armed forces in the run up to Commemoration Sunday. More generally, Archer and Matheson claim that emotional imperialism involves a form of domination in which a powerful group imposes their emotional regime on a less powerful group. An emotional regime a set of norms that shapes the emotional lives of its members, and that is essential for the political stability of that society (Reddy 2001, 124). As well as imposing norms of emotional fittingness, this may involve the powerful imposing emotional practices and norms for emotional regulation and interpretation on the less powerful (Archer and Matheson 2023). It may also involve designing public spaces in ways designed to impose the dominant group's emotional regime on the less powerful, for instance through building statues celebrating colonial oppressors (Archer 2024; Archer and Matheson 2023).

These analyses highlight different forms of affective injustice but leave unanswered the question of what makes an affective injustice an injustice. Francisco Gallegos (2022) proposes a distributive account of affective justice in response to this more general question. On this account, affective injustice involves being deprived of affective goods which one is owed. Gallegos proposes two fundamental affective goods. First, subjective well-being, meaning roughly a happy and fulfilled emotional life (Gallegos 2022, 191). Second, emotional aptness which involves one's emotions evaluating the world accurately (Gallegos

2022, 193). When one is deprived of either of these fundamental goods unfairly, this constitutes an affective injustice.

Having provided a brief overview of some of the key contributions to the literature on affective injustice,[4] which has focused primarily on the emotion of anger. In the rest of this chapter, we will extend this discussion to the emotion of fear.

Dismissing Fear

Existing accounts of affective injustice about anger can also be applied to fear. In this section, we will argue for this by showing how Whitney's and Srinivasan's accounts of affective injustice and anger also apply to dominant responses to fear.

First, as with anger, the failure to give uptake to the fears expressed by members of oppressed groups can constitute a form of affective injustice. There are cases where reasonable expressions of fear by victims of oppression are unfairly dismissed as unwarranted. For example, many women insist upon meeting in a public space for a first date, to the bewilderment of the man that they intend to meet. The man himself may think that it is strange to have this insistence, *he* may know that he is a good man and does not intend to harm the woman, but given the prevalence of male violence against women it is entirely appropriate that a woman meeting a man for the first time might be afraid of being alone with him. He might even see her fear of him prior to knowing him as a case of misandry, if she fears him solely on the grounds of his gender.

Another example of the failure to give uptake to the fears of members of oppressed groups involves fearing the police. Take, for example, the Black Lives Matter protests in the wake of George Floyd's murder by a policeman in the United States in 2020. Around this time, many Black Americans expressed the fear they had for the police. One poll found that while 77% of White Americans said that they trust the local police to look after their

interests, only 36% of Black Americans said the same (Talev 2020). Then President Donald Trump described this lack of trust as "a very sad problem" (Brest 2020). He then dismissed the idea that Black Americans had special reason to fear the police by saying that the number of civilian deaths at the hands of the police were "very tiny. I use the word tiny, It's a very small percentage" and claimed that White Americans were more likely to die at the hands of the police (Vazquez 2020).[5] Similarly, after British woman Sarah Everard was raped and murdered by a London police officer in 2021, a nationwide survey found that 47% of women reported that their trust in the police had declined. In addition, 10% of women surveyed said that they would be less likely to report a sexual assault to the police than before (End Violence Against Women 2021). These fears were also dismissed by those in positions of power. For example, Boris Johnson, the then Prime Minister of the UK, called on, "women in particular, girls and young women, women of all ages, to trust the police" adding that, "'They are overwhelmingly trustworthy" (Wilcock 2021).

Another example of this phenomenon is the dismissal of fears expressed by Black women in the USA during childbirth. Non-Hispanic Black women in the USA have a maternal fatality rate that is around 3 times higher than the rate for Non-Hispanic White women (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2024). Speaking about the disproportionate numbers of Black Women dying in childbirth, the obstetrician-gynecologist Neel Shah who is the director of the Delivery Decisions Initiative at Ariadne Labs said, "The common thread is that when black women expressed concern about their symptoms, clinicians were more delayed and seemed to believe them less" (Roeder 2019). As Ami Harbin (2023, 56) summarizes, this is one example of a more general phenomenon in which, "Black women's fears of adverse outcomes in health-care contexts [. . .] are more likely to be dismissed." These cases involve the kind of affective injustice identified by Whitney, in which people are denied up uptake for their emotions. People's legitimate fears are denied

uptake and dismissed as irrational or a sign of mental instability, rather than a response to danger.

These cases involve a refusal to be affectively moved by the fear and to allow it to influence one's evaluations of the object of being feared. These are instances of affective marginalization, as they involve the exclusion of the fears of oppressed people from the shared world of affect circulation. As the case of the dismissal of Black women's fear in healthcare contexts makes clear, this affective dismissal can have tragic material consequences, as medical symptoms are ignored, and fatality rates are significantly higher.

Gallegos' account provides one way of analysing the nature of the injustice here. One problem with the dismissal of fear in these cases is that the fear may well be apt. Aptness in this context means that the emotion it represents its object accurately (D'Arms and Jacobsen 2000). Fear is apt when the object of fear represents a genuine threat (Harbin 2023, 40). For instance, in the case of Black women's fears of adverse health outcomes in the United States, it seems that they do have good reason to fear such outcomes, or at least to fear that medical staff may not take them seriously when they face a medical problem. The dismissal of these apt emotional responses by others may lead to people being unfairly deprived of apt emotional responses.

The reason is that how others respond to and interpret our emotions impacts on how we interpret and respond to these emotions ourselves. As Sue Campbell (1997, 76) has argued, it is through expressing our emotions to others and their responses that we determine both the object of our emotion and the particular emotion that we are feeling. When others dismiss our emotions, this can make us uncertain of what it is that we are feeling and what this feeling is directed towards. Campbell gives the example of a game of Pictionary, in which one player fails to draw something her teammate can recognize and shrugs to them as

the time runs out. This player may not be sure exactly what she is feeling and what this shrug is expressing. We can imagine the teammate shrugging back sympathetically. This may help the player to understand what she is feeling as an apologetic acceptance of her own artistic limitations. However, if her teammate responds by saying "Look, if you hate the game that much then we will all stop playing," (Campbell 1997, 109) then this will have a very different impact on her feelings. This response is likely to make the player unsure of what she expressed and so unsure too of what she is feeling. This feeling of doubt is likely to make the feelings themselves "become more indeterminate" (1997, 110).

The point here is not just that we may be unsure about what emotion we are experiencing. It is also the ontological point that the feeling we are experiencing may not form itself into fear but instead into something more disparate and confused. Similarly, if people refuse uptake to our fears, this can cause our feelings to be more confused (Harbin 2023, 48-59). If this occurs, then the dismissal of people's fear may lead them to be deprived of an apt emotional response to a threat they face and instead be faced with a more disparate and confused affective state. Refusing uptake to people's fears may deprive them of apt emotional responses to the threats that they face.

However, this is not the only way in which refusing uptake to fears may constitute an affective injustice. As Harbin argues, it can be important to give uptake to people's fears even when they are not apt emotional responses to the threats people are facing or when it is not yet clear whether these emotions are apt or not. As Harbin explains, "Fearing together is so fundamental to our emotional well-being that there are disorders that arise from having to fear alone" (Harbin 2023, 136). An important part of what Harbin claims is involved in fearing well together is allowing others "to remain present while fearing rather than experience fears and immediately need to avoid, attack, or fix them", which involves allowing people "to *experience and express* fears openly and in ways that help fearers simply

have the experiences rather than need to do anything about them" (Harbin 2023, 136). This may be important, even when we think that someone's fear is not responding to a realistic threat that they face.

There are two reasons why dismissing inapt fears may constitute an affective injustice, even though it may not deprive people of apt emotional responses. First, if Harbin is right that fearing together is fundamental to emotional well-being then denying uptake to such fears may unfairly undermine people's subjective well-being. Second, taking people's fears seriously, even when one does not think that they are responses to legitimate threats, may be an important part of taking that person seriously as a person. As Harbin argues, "Having one's emotions dismissed can also feel like being dismissed as who one is" (2023, 146). Similarly, Campbell claims that dismissing someone's emotions can amount to, "the dismissal of the significance to a person of his or her own life, in a way that reaches deeply into what the significance of a life can be to the person whose life it is" (Campbell 1997, 188). Even when someone's fears may not be responses to genuine threats, they are still likely to be distressing for the person experiencing them. By dismissing such fears, we may fail to take their feelings seriously and so fail to take their humanity seriously.

This dismissal may constitute a lack of recognition for them as a person and so constitute a lack of what Gallegos calls 'affective recognition'. Gallegos suggests that affective recognition is relevant for both subjective well-being and emotional aptness, as a failure of recognition could involve failing to take someone's emotional needs into account or not viewing them as "a legitimate participant in the normative practice of emotional aptness" (Gallegos 2022, 196). In dismissing people's fears, we may deny them both forms of affective recognition even when this fear is inapt, depriving them of both subjective wellbeing and also emotional aptness, by closing them off from relationships that may facilitate the development of more apt emotional responses. As Harbin argues, refusing

uptake to someone's fears may lead to the breakdown of relationships. Having one's fears dismissed can feel like a dismissal of who one is as a person and this may put that person off from any future interaction with the person who has dismissed them. Moreover, the need for affective recognition may push people to look elsewhere for uptake for their fears. As Harbin describes, "a refusal of recognition can mean that a fearer both turns *away* from those with beliefs that challenge their own and turns *toward* other who share their beliefs" (2023, 147). Through this process, the fearful may find themselves attracted to echo chambers in which people not only give their fears uptake but reinforce those fears, leading them further away from apt emotional responses.

There are also cases of affective injustice related to fear that fit the kind of affective injustice identified by Srinivasan. Victims of oppression may also find themselves in situations in which they face a conflict between an apt fear response and the response that will best advance their interests. For example, victims of abuse may face situations where they have good reason to think that expressing their fear will have a negative impact on their wellbeing. When there is a relationship between the fearer and the feared, fear may be treated as offensive. An abusive parent might be deeply hurt when they learn that their abuse has caused their child to fear them. The parent's hurt may become the central issue in the relationship between the parent and the child, rather than the child's fear or the abuse that caused it, which may prevent the fear and abuse being properly addressed. This may also damage the relationship the child has with the parent in ways that ultimately undermine the child's interests, as the parent comes to overlook the child's needs, deny them resources, or prioritize the needs of other children who have not expressed fear. It may even lead to further abuse.

Similarly, a 2021 study found that fear of their abuser, along with fear of judgement and fear of losing access to children, was a key reason that victims of domestic violence did

not disclose their situation to their healthcare provider (Heron & Eisma 2021, 624). If expressing fears of one's abuser means losing custody of one's children, then one faces a situation where one is unjustly forced to choose between expressing an apt emotion and advancing one's interests. This is a genuine normative conflict between experiencing an emotion that accurately represents the world and an emotion that will best advance one's interests. In the case of fear, the suppression of one's fears may lead one to downplay genuine threats one is facing. In addition, one may find that suppressing fears about one's abusers may mean that those fears are displaced onto other objects that are not fitting targets of fear (Harbin 2023, 74-81).

We have outlined the ways in which the existing literature on affective injustice concerning emotional expression in relation to anger, also arise in relation to fear. Victims of oppression face situations where their fears are unfairly denied uptake and where they unfairly face situations in which fear is apt but counterproductive. We now turn to investigate forms of fear-related affective injustice not directly linked to emotional expression.

Living in Fear

While the existing literature on affective injustice has focused mostly on injustices concerning expressions of emotion, another kind of wrongdoing becomes apparent when we consider how people may be wronged in relation to fear. An important way in which people may be wronged in relation to fear, is through having to live one's life in fear.

People may live in fear as a by-product of their material conditions. Someone surviving on precarious employment contracts or government benefits which do not cover the cost-of-living face situations that are likely to induce fear for one's future. Fear can be an intentional strategy used to control other people. This is especially clear in cases of domestic violence. As the social geographer Rachel Pain describes, "Fear is not just a by-product of

domestic abuse, but a key element that keeps it going" (Pain, 2012 p.14). Pain's report into patterns in domestic violence shows that fear is not only the result of the violence that abusive partners display, but that fear can be the intention behind that violence. Creating a climate of fear in the household can result in the victim of intimate partner violence being passive, obedient, and less likely to attempt to leave the partnership or seek help. While clearest in the context of violent abuse, violence may not be necessary to create such a climate, the mere threat of violence may be enough.

Fear as a tool to gain control is not limited to the individual cases such as that of domestic violence. Fear can also be weaponized as a political tool. As Claudia Card (1991) has argued, sexual violence against women should not only be viewed as a harm to the individuals who face such violence but also as a terrorist institution that serves as a standing threat to women which bolsters the power of men. On Card's account of the terrorization of women, fear of rape functions to promote obedience and compliance from women and to uphold the power of men.[6] As Pumla Dineo Gqola explains, "fear is an excellent way to keep people under control because it forces us to police ourselves, in the false hope that we may be able to keep ourselves safe" (2022, 67). To take another example, fear of the financial repercussions of workplace retaliation is a strategy that employers use to deter workforces from unionizing or individual workers from demanding their rights. Finally, building statues and memorials celebrating colonialists and racial supremacists can provoke fear amongst racialized groups when they enter public spaces (Ahmed 2007; Archer 2024; Maise 2022). These cases function like the domestic violence case but on a larger scale, as an atmosphere of fear is created to control the behavior of those who are made to feel afraid. These situations can create barriers to expressing fear and so constitute an affective injustice for this reason.

However, the creation of the climate of fear should also be seen as an affective injustice in itself, as it unfairly subjects people to emotions that have a severely detrimental impact on their subjective well-being. As Gallegos suggests, an account of affective injustice should cover "conditions in which a person or social group is unduly subjected to such things as: frequent and/or intense experiences of fear, grief, anger, distrust, and resignation" (Gallegos 2022, 191). In addition to impacting subjective well-being directly, living in a climate of fear also restricts freedom. As Corey Robin explains, the fear of the powerless towards the powerful, "is repressive, constraining the actions of the less powerful, enabling the actions of the more powerful" (Robin 2004, 20). This fear constrains people's freedom by ensuring that "the less powerful abide by the express or implied wishes of their supervisors, or merely do nothing to challenge or undermine the existing distribution of power" (Robin 2004, 20).

Similarly, as Card explains, the aim of terrorism is:

> Terror, panicky and heightened fear, makes us vulnerable to manipulation. We feel an urgent need to act before it is too late. Thus we are in a poor position to reflect, get things in perspective. We are in a poor position to be prudent or even just. Our attention is riveted by the threat of disaster and what we can do to prevent it. We are thus not so apt to pay attention to the terrorizer's situation, options, motivations, or aims, except as they define what we must do to avoid disaster. We feel our options narrowed to the point of almost no control (1991, 302).

Through provoking fear, terrorism undermines people's ability to control their own responses to a situation and leaves them vulnerable to manipulation. This increases the power of the terrorists over those they terrorize. This lack of control may also be seen as a deprivation of what Gallegos calls 'affective freedom' which is the ability to pursue

subjective well-being or emotional aptness free from "circumstances that give rise to emotional distress and negative or unpleasant emotions" (Gallegos 2022, 192). As Gallegos argues, the denial of such freedom undermines one's ability to secure these fundamental affective goods. Finally, fear is used by the powerful to enable them to impose their emotional regime on the less powerful. Fear of the consequences of violating the emotional norms of the powerful encourages compliance, at least in public. This may eventually lead to these norms becoming internalized and the lives of the less powerful being controlled from the inside through the adoption of emotional norms that bolster the position of the powerful (Nandy 1983). Archer and Matheson (2023) call this form of domination, in which the powerful impose their emotional norms on the less powerful, 'emotional imperialism'. As Archer and Matheson argue, this domination helps support the hierarchical relationship, whilst also constituting a form of affective injustice in its own right. Affective injustice, then, is not confined to how people respond to emotional expressions but can also involve unfairly subjecting people to negative emotions. While this point has been acknowledged in passing in the existing literature, focusing on the imposition of fear highlights the significance of this form of affective injustice.

Being the Target of Unwarranted Fear

The final fear-related form of affective injustice we will consider involves being the target of unwarranted fear.

There are many cases where an inappropriate fear of a person or group due to prejudice, stereotypes and dominant cultural narratives contributes to unjustified fear of an already marginalized group. For instance, Frantz Fanon describes being on a train when a white child says to his mother, "*Maman*, look, a Negro! I'm scared!" (Fanon 2017, 91). The boy's fear here arises from a deep-seated colonial emotional logic, according to which black people are to be feared (Fanon 2017; Khanna 2020, 7). Similarly, the activist group,

Changing Faces, has a campaign called "I am not your villain" in which they call on the entertainment industry to stop perpetuating fear of facial difference by using disfigurement or visible disability as part of their characterization of villains in film and media. Their research suggests that study participants with a visible difference were more than twice as likely to have seen someone with a visible difference playing a villain in a film than playing a romantic lead (Changing Faces 2021). Disability and visible difference are sometimes used as shorthand to indicate a particular character's villainous nature, which leads to fear and stigma of visibly disabled people, or people with visible differences such as scarring and birthmarks.

One reason to consider these cases of affective injustice, is the direct negative impact that being targeted with this fear has on people's subjective well-being. Research carried out by Changing Faces examined the long-term impacts of the negative representation of people with visible differences. They found that around a third of respondents reported low levels of confidence, struggles with body image and low self-esteem while a quarter reported that negative representations had had a negative impact on their mental health (Changing Faces 2021). These portrayals, then, have an unfair negative impact on the subjective well-being of people with visible differences and so are an instance of affective injustice. Similarly, Fanon describes in detail, being subjected to racist fear has a severely damaging psychological effect on those targeted. As Whitney (2018, 504-507) analyzes Fanon's discussion, this involves not only a form of objectification and a denial of affective uptake but also damages the ability of the racialized person to make sense of their affective lives, particularly because sense-making is an activity that we engage in with others.

Another reason to consider these cases unjust is that they create barriers to empathy. In Sara Ahmed's phenomenological analysis of Fanon's passage, she claims that "fear does not bring the bodies together, as a form of shared or fellow feeling" (Ahmed 2004, 63). While one body (the child's) is affected by the other's (Fanon's) "what passes is not the same affect"

(Ahmed 2004, 63). Rather, fear "re-establishes distance between bodies" (Ahmed 2004, 63). Similarly, psychological researchers have found that inducing fear in participants reduces their levels of empathy towards members of out-groups (Richins et al., 2021). In these experiments, participants who were shown pictures intended to prompt fear, (such as spiders, snakes, or a gun pointed towards the camera) reported lower levels of empathy towards outgroups than the control group were shown neutral images. Empathy towards in-group members were not affected. The researchers concluded that fear reduces the empathy we have towards members of other groups.

One tragic example of this occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw an increase in xenophobic hate crimes against Asians across the globe. Several researchers linked this to fear of the deadly virus (e.g. Gover et al., 2020; Lantz et al., 2023a). For example, Lantz et al (2023b) found that fear of the risks posed by the virus played a significant role in the increase of anti-Asian prejudice amongst the participants in the study. Here, Asian people not only faced the affective injustice of being unfairly targeted with fear but also the increased violence arising from this fear.

The effect outlined here, of people being the targets of unwarranted fear, gives us a reason to be cautious of the claim that we should uncritically give uptake to feelings of fear. Earlier, we outlined cases where a failure to take fear seriously is an affective injustice, but as we have seen in this section, sometimes fear of someone, or actions based on fear, can be unjust themselves. This represents a tension in our account. Is it affective injustice to deny someone their right to feel or to express fear when that fear is also unjust? This need not be a problem for our account, only a reason to exercise caution when identifying affective injustice. As is the case with anger, there are going to be occasions where fear is apt, and there are going to be cases where it is not. This represents an interesting area of further research in the field of affective injustice.

A significant reason why the literature on affective injustice in cases of anger is so interesting is because views about anger are often shaped by our picture of anger as a destructive force, often wielded by a powerful person. Srinivasan uses "the petulant and vengeful Achilles" as an example of what we must be cautious of when it comes to anger (Srinivasan 2018, 142). What has so far been overlooked in the affective injustice literature is the injustice of being a target of emotion when that emotion is not apt. This makes some sense, given that the focus of this literature so far has been on emotional expression. We have argued that being the target of unwarranted fear can be an injustice in itself. This has implications for research on anger too, we ought to give more uptake to warranted anger, but unwarranted anger might also be unjust.

Being the target of unwarranted fear can also lead being made to live in fear. Fanon's example from earlier, of the white child vocalizing a learned fear of Black people that follows colonial emotional logic shows a pattern of thought that results in very real danger to the targets of this fear. Being feared creates a pretext to harm you, which can in turn cause the target of unwarranted fear to live in fear themselves. For example, in 2020, Amy Cooper, a white woman, was walking her dog in central park when she had a verbal altercation with Christian Cooper, a Black man who was out birdwatching and had asked her to put her dog on a leash (Vera and Ly 2020). A video of the interaction surfaced in which Amy Copper can be heard threatening to call the police and saying "I am going to tell them that an African American man is threatening my life." Amy Cooper can be understood here as weaponizing the racist emotional logic that Fanon describes in order to make Christian Cooper feel afraid for his own life. Some journalists interpret this situation as Amy Cooper threatening to give police a pretext to harm Christian Cooper, and relying on the unwarranted fear of Black men, in order to provoke the warranted fear of police that Christian Cooper may have had.

Examples like this show that, not only is being the target of unwarranted fear an injustice in itself, but it can also lead the target to live in fear.

Conclusion

We have expanded the discussion of affective injustice beyond the emotion of anger by exploring the connections between affective injustice and fear. We have argued that the unfair dismissal of people's fears can constitute a form of affective injustice. However, the focus on fear also highlights the fact the dismissal of emotions may be unjust even when those emotions are not accurately representing their targets as threats. We may treat people unfairly by dismissing their fears even when those fears are inapt. We then argued that being made to live in fear can also constitute a form of affective injustice. This shows that affective injustice is not confined to how people respond to emotional expressions but can also involve unfairly subjecting people to negative emotions. While this point has been acknowledged in the existing literature, it has not been explored in detail. Finally, we argued that being the target of unwarranted fear can also constitute a form of affective injustice, both for its negative effects on subjective well-being and for the way it contributes to the reduction of empathy towards those who are feared. One thread that weaves throughout this piece is that whose fear is given institutional and cultural uptake can reinforce pre-existing societal power dynamics. We hope to have demonstrated how the detailed study of emotions other than anger may helpfully inform the growing literature on affective injustice.

Bibliography

Ahmed, Sara. 2004.*The cultural politics of emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press,

Ahmed, Sara. 2007. "A phenomenology of whiteness". *Feminist theory*, 8 no.2 : 149-168.

Archer, Alfred. 2024. "How Public Statues Wrong: Affective Artifacts and Affective Injustice." *Topoi* 43: 809-819.

Archer, Alfred, and Benjamin Matheson. 2022 "Commemoration and emotional imperialism." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 39 (5): 761-777.

Archer, Alfred, and Benjamin Matheson. 2023 “Emotional Imperialism.” *Philosophical Topics* 51 (1):7-25.

Archer, Alfred, and Georgina Mills. 2019 “Anger, affective injustice, and emotion regulation.” *Philosophical Topics*, *47*(2): 75-94.

Archer, Alfred, Alan Thomas and Bart Engelen. 2022. “The Politics of Envy: Outlaw Emotions in Capitalist Societies” in *The Moral Psychology of Envy* edited by Sara Protasi, 181-198. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Ben-Ze'ev, Aaron. 2001. *The subtlety of emotions*. Cambridge MA: MIT press.

Brest, Mike. 2020. “Trump: Black community’s distrust in law enforcement is ‘a very sad problem’”. *Washinton Examiner* June 3, 2020. Available at: https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/2398180/trump-black-communitys-distrust-in-law-enforcement-is-a-very-sad-problem/ [Accessed 28/5/2024].

Campbell, Susan. 1997. *Interpreting the personal: Expression and the formation of feelings*. Cornell University Press.

Card, Claudia. 1991. “Rape as a Terrorist Institution”. In *Violence, Terrorism, and Justice* edited by Raymond G. Frey and Christopher W. Morris 296-319, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Changing Faces. 2021. *I am not your villain: Representation of people with a visible difference in popular culture.* (28/9/2021) Available at: https://www.changingfaces.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/i-am-not-your-villian/ [Accessed 28/5/2024].

D'Arms, Justin and Daniel Jacobson. 2000. "The Moralistic Fallacy: On the 'Appropriateness' of Emotion." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 61* (1): 65-90.

DeGue, Sarah, Katherine A. Fowler, and Cynthia Calkins. 2016. "Deaths due to use of lethal force by law enforcement: Findings from the national violent death reporting system, 17 US states, 2009–2012". *American journal of preventive medicine,* 51 (5): S173-S187.

Döring, Sabine A. 2020. "How Safe Should We Feel?: On the Ethics of Fear in the Public Sphere." In *The Ethics of Belief and Beyond*, pp. 215-233. Routledge

End Violence Against Women 2021. "Almost half of women have less trust in police following Sarah Everard murder". *End Violence Against Women* November 18, 2021. Available at: https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/almost-half-of-women-have-less-trust-in-police-following-sarah-everard-murder/ [Accessed 28/5/2024].

Fanon, Franz. 2017. *Black skin, white masks.* Translated by C. L. Markmann. Pluto press.

Fricker, Miranda. 2007. *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gallegos, Francisco. 2022. "Affective injustice and fundamental affective goods." 53 (2): 185-201.

Goffin, Kris. 2023. "Better scared than sorry: The pragmatic account of emotional representation". *Erkenntnis*, 88(6): 2633-2650.

Gover, Angela R., Shannon B. Harper, and Lynn Langton. 2020. "Anti-Asian hate crime during the COVID-19 pandemic: Exploring the reproduction of inequality." *American journal of criminal justice* 45(4): 647-667.

Gqola, Pumla Dineo. 2022. *Female Fear Factory: unravelling Patriarchy's Cultures of Violence*. Abuja: Cassava Republic Press.

Harbin, Ami. 2023. *Fearing Together: Ethics for Insecurity*. Oxford University Press.

Heron, Rebecca L., and Maarten C. Eisma. 2021. "Barriers and facilitators of disclosing domestic violence to the healthcare service: A systematic review of qualitative research". *Health and Social Care in the Community*. 29 (3): 612-630.

Khanna, Neetu. 2020. *The visceral logics of decolonization*. Duke University Press.

Krueger, Joel. 2023. An ecological approach to affective injustice. *Philosophical Topics*. 51(1):

Lantz, Brendan, and Marin R. Wenger. 2023a. "Anti-Asian xenophobia, hate crime victimization, and fear of victimization during the COVID-19 pandemic." *Journal of interpersonal violence* 38.1-2: 1088-1116.

Lantz, Brendan, Marin R. Wenger, and Jack M. Mills. 2023b. "Fear, political legitimization, and racism: Examining anti-Asian xenophobia during the COVID-19 pandemic." *Race and Justice* 13 (1): 80-104.

Lerner, Jennifer S., and Dacher Keltner. 2001. "Fear, anger, and risk." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 81 (1): 146-159.

Lorde, Audre. 1984 [2019]. "The Uses of Anger" in *Sister Outsider*, 124-133 London: Penguin.

Maiese, Michelle. "White Supremacy as an affective milieu." *Topoi* 41.5 (2022): 905-915.

Mills, Georgina. 2019. "Swallowing Traumatic Anger: Family Abuse and the Pressure to Forgive." *Public Philosophy Journal*. 2 (2).

Nussbaum, Martha C. 2019. *The monarchy of fear: A philosopher looks at our political crisis*. Simon & Schuster.

Öhman, Arne, and Susan Mineka. 2001. "Fears, phobias, and preparedness: toward an evolved module of fear and fear learning." *Psychological review* 108 (3): 483.

Osler, Lucy, Bart Engelen, and Alfred Archer. 2025. “The ethics and politics of nudges and niches: a critical analysis of exclusionary environmental designs”. In *Preventing Crime by Exclusion: Ethical Considerations* edited by Sebastian Jon Holmen, Thomas Søbirk Petersen, Jesper Ryberg London: Routledge.

Pain, Rachel. 2012. *Everyday terrorism: How fear works in domestic abuse*. Report published by the Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, Durham University and Scottish Women’s Aid. Available at: https://womensaid.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/EverydayTerrorismReport.pdf [Accessed 28/5/2024].

Pismenny, Arina, Gen Eickers, & Jesse Prinz. 2024 “Emotional Injustice”, *Ergo an Open Access Journal of Philosophy* 11 (6)

Plunkett, David. 2021. "Debate: Anger, Fitting Attitudes, and Srinivasan’s Category of “Affective Injustice”." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 29 (1): 117-131.

Puddifoot, Katherine, and Marina Trakas. 2023. "Epistemic agency and the generalisation of fear." *Synthese* 202:1.

Reddy, William M. 2001. *The navigation of feeling: A framework for the history of emotions*. Cambridge University Press.

Robin, Corey. 2004. *Fear: The history of a political idea*. Oxford University Press.

Roeder, Amy. 2019. America is Failing Its Black Mothers. *Harvard Public Health* Available at: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/magazine/magazine_article/america-is-failing-its-

black-mothers/#:~:text=The%20CDC%20now%20estimates%20that,the%20women%20suffering%20are%20black [Accessed 29/5/2024].

Srinivasan, Amia. 2018. "The aptness of anger." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 26 (2): 123-144.

Stockdale, Katie. 2023. "(Why) Do We Need a Theory of Affective Injustice?" *Philosophical Topics*. Vol.51 (1): 113-134.

Talev, Margaret. 2020. "Axios-Ipsos poll: America's big racial divide on police, virus" *Axios*, June 2 2020 Available at: https://www.axios.com/2020/06/02/axios-ipsos-coronavirus-week-11-george-floyd [Accessed 28/5/2024].

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2024. "Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System" May 15, 2024 Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/maternal-mortality/php/pregnancy-mortality-surveillance/index.html [Accessed 29/5/2024].

Vazquez, Maegan. 2020. "Trump leans into racist rhetoric and downplays police violence against Black Americans". *CNN*, July 14, 2020. Available at: https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/14/politics/donald-trump-police-brutality/index.html [Accessed 28/5/2024].

Vera, Amir, and Laura Ly. 2020. "White woman who called police on a black man bird-watching in Central Park has been fired" *CNN*. https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/26/us/central-park-video-dog-video-african-american-trnd/index.html [Accessed 12/08/2024].

Whitney, Shiloh. 2018. "Affective intentionality and affective Injustice: Merleau-Ponty and Fanon on the Body Schema as a Theory of Affect." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 56 (4): 488-515.

Whitney, Shiloh. 2023. "Anger Gaslighting and Affective Injustice" *Philosophical Topics*. Vol.51 (1): 27-63.

Wildman, Nathan, Natascha Rietdijk, and Alfred Archer. 2022. Online Affective Manipulation In *Manipulation Online: Philosophical Perspectives on Human-Machine Interactions* edited by Fleur Jongepier and Michael Klenk, 311-326. London: Routledge.

Wilcock, David. 2021. "'Trust the police': Boris Johnson says women should have 'confidence' in officers despite murder of Sarah Everard during fake stop by PC Wayne Couzens - after Tory crime commissioner is savaged by minister for saying they need to be more 'streetwise'" *Daily Mail.* October 3, 2021. Available at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10054011/Boris-Johnson-outraged-Tory-told-women-streetwise-Sarah-Everards-murder.html [Accessed 28/5/2024].

Young, Iris Marion. 1990. "Five Faces of Oppression." In *Justice and the Politics of Difference,* edited by Iris Marion Young. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

---

[1] Thanks to audiences at the EPSSE conference in Lisbon and the Faces of Affective Injustice workshop at FU Berlin for helpful feedback. Special thanks to Ami Harbin and Corinne Lajoie for incredibly helpful feedback on earlier drafts of this paper. Special thanks to the Pandemic & Disaster Preparedness Center for funding Georgie Mills' work on this chapter.

[2] For a related discussion of this demand see Lorde (1984). Lorde's focus is on the benefits of anger rather its counterproductivity.

[3] For further discussion of this form of affective injustice see Archer & Mills (2019), Mills (2019), and Plunkett (2021).

[4] In the interests of brevity, this overview is not exhaustive. For further contributions to this literature see Archer et al., (2022); Krueger (2023); Osler et al., (2025); Pismenny et al., (2023); Stockdale (2023); Whitney (2023); Wildman et al., (2022).

[5] A Federal Study of deaths by law enforcement in the United States between 2009 and 2012 found that the total number of White Americans killed by law enforcement was higher than the total number of Black Americans but that Black Americans were 2.8 times more likely to be the victim of such a fatality (DeGue et al., 2016).

[6] Card (1991) claims that this terrorism can function without all women experiencing fear, as some will be granted protection by the men in their life. This protection functions as a form of protection racket bolstering the power of men over women by making women dependent on men for their protection.