

Emotional Imperialism

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Abstract

How might people be wronged in relation to their feelings, moods, and emotions? Recently philosophers have begun to investigate the idea that these kinds of wrongs may constitute a distinctive form of injustice: *affective injustice* (Archer & Mills 2019; Mills 2019; Srinivasan 2018; Whitney 2018). In previous work, we have outlined a particular form of affective injustice that we called *emotional imperialism* (Archer & Matheson 2022). This paper has two main aims. First, we aim to provide an expanded account of the forms that emotional imperialism can take. We will do so by drawing inspiration from William Reddy's concept of an emotional regime and investigating ways in which colonial powers of the 18th to 20th Centuries sought to impose their emotional regimes on their colonial subjects. Second, we will offer more expansive accounts of both emotional imperialism and affective injustice that can accommodate these additional forms of emotional imperialism.

Introduction

Between the 15th and 20th Centuries, many European countries sought to expand their empires through establishing colonies around the world. The success of these colonial projects generally required a significant number of people to emigrate from the colonizer country to settle in the colony. These settlers were needed to control

the local population and to enforce colonial rule, for example by working as soldiers, police officers, bureaucrats, or civil servants. These settlers often had quite different ways of understanding and managing their emotional lives from the indigenous population. In response, many settler powers sought to impose their own ways of thinking and acting on emotions—which William Reddy (2001) calls a society’s emotional regime—on the colonized. While colonialism is widely accepted to have been a grave moral wrong, is there anything distinctively wrong about imposing one’s emotional regime on others?

In previous work, we outlined the concept of *emotional imperialism*, a form of cultural imperialism focused on emotional experience. As we defined it in our earlier work, emotional imperialism, “involves a powerful group imposing aspects of its culture’s emotional norms and standards on another less powerful group whilst at the same time marking out the other culture’s emotional norms and standards as deviant and inferior” (Archer & Matheson 2022: 771). This account was inspired by Iris Young’s account of cultural imperialism, a form of oppression in which “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” (1990/2009: 58-59). We used this concept to articulate the wrongs involved in enforced participation in contemporary commemorative practices expressing admiration for the armed forces of a country with a long and brutal colonial history. We focused on two forms of emotional imperialism: 1. The projection and enforcement of a dominant group’s norms for emotional fittingness. 2. The projection and enforcement of a dominant group’s norms for emotional

prioritization. Our focus in this earlier work was, like Young, on contemporary post-colonial societies.

In this paper, we turn our attention to colonial societies, focussing on colonial campaigns of European nations between the 18th and 20th Centuries. Our aim in doing so is to use these especially clear and extreme cases of imperialism to give us a fuller understanding of the various forms that emotional imperialism can take. We will do so by drawing inspiration from Reddy's concept of an emotional regime.

The second aim of the paper is to use this richer understanding of emotional imperialism to contribute to the ongoing discussion about the nature of affective injustice, which is a distinctive form of injustice relating to our feeling, moods, and emotions (Srinivasan 2018; Whitney 2018; Archer & Matheson 2022). At the most general level we can understand an affective injustice as an injustice that is faced by someone specifically in their capacity as an affective being (Archer & Mills 2019). More informatively, Francisco Gallegos (2022) argues that an affective injustice should be understood as the deprivation of fundamental affective goods which people are owed. According to Gallegos, two such goods are subjective well-being and emotional aptness, as these goods are basic elements of a flourishing emotional life. Obtaining these fundamental goods may also require the provision of subsidiary goods such as affective freedoms, affective resources and opportunities, and affective recognition. While this account marks an important step towards a theory of the nature of affective justice, we will argue that we need a more expansive conception of affective justice to accommodate the forms of injustice that we will explore here.

Our discussion will proceed as follows. We will start, in Section One, by outlining the concept of an emotional regime. We will then, in Section Two, outline the various forms that emotional imperialism can take. Next, in Section Three, we will provide an expanded conception of emotional imperialism that is capable of accommodating these additional forms. Finally, in Section Four, we will argue that this fuller understanding of emotional imperialism also requires us to broaden our understanding of affective injustice.

Before we begin, note two things. First, our focus is on specifically emotional experiences rather than affective experiences more generally (which also include feelings, moods, and atmospheres). While much of what we say may also apply to other affective states, we restrict our focus on emotional experience to allow for a more in-depth discussion. Second, we aim to illuminate undertheorized forms of emotional imperialism by focusing predominantly on the clearest cases of imperialism—in particular, the kind of imperialism involved in the colonial campaigns of European nations between the 18th and 20th Centuries. We do not restrict our focus in this way to suggest that the kinds of wrongs we articulate exist only in the past. Rather we do so because these cases offer particularly clear, extreme, and relatively uncontroversial cases of the phenomenon we are interested in. Our aim is that the conceptual resources that we develop through focussing on these clear and extreme instances of emotional imperialism can then be used to help in the diagnosis and understanding of contemporary instances of affective injustice.

1. Emotional Regimes

According to William Reddy (2001: 124, 129), each society at a given time has a dominant *emotional regime*—that is, a set of norms that shapes the emotional lives of its members, and that is essential for the political stability of that society.¹ An emotional regime consists of different kinds of norms, such as about what emotions are fitting, how to prioritise fitting emotions when they conflict, how to interpret our and other's emotions, how we should regulate our emotions, and what practices express particular emotions.

For example, a monarchical society might have the following instances of the above-mentioned types of norms:

Fittingness: the King, just for being the King, is a fitting target of honor and admiration.

Prioritization: we ought to prioritise our positive responses to the King's good traits over our negative responses to his bad traits.

Interpretation: we ought to distinguish the positive emotion of admiration from the positive emotion of gratitude.

Regulation: we ought not suppress our sadness at a person dying through finding humour in the situation.

¹ Cf. Hochschild's (1983) work on feeling rules, Ahmed's (2004) work on the way emotions function as cultural practices, and Jaggar's (1989) work on emotional hegemony.

Practices: funeral practices express sadness and grief.

Importantly, there can be differences between the emotional regimes of different societies. Different societies may have different norms for who is worthy of respect and admiration, for example, and who is a fitting subject of contempt. Different societies may also have different norms for how people should express these different emotions and different collective emotional practices. Different societies may also have very different ways of categorizing their emotional lives. For instance, there is no perfect translation for the Ilongot people's emotion *liget* that Reddy (2001: 36 discussing work by Rosaldo 1980) claims overlaps with several different emotion terms in English, including anger, envy, heat, and energy. The result is that emotional regimes of other societies can appear entirely alien and may even be in some respects untranslatable.

While an emotional regime can perhaps consist of further types of norms (such as norms about whose role it is to perform various forms of emotional labor and norms for how one should understand the nature of emotions), we focus on these five aspects of emotional regimes in what follows. Just as our earlier work focused on postcolonial contexts, it also focused on the first two aspects of an emotional regime: norms about fittingness and norms about emotional prioritization. In the next section, after providing colonial examples of these two features, we will then identify colonial examples of the other three features. This will motivate our expanded analysis of emotional imperialism that we give in section 3.

2. Forms of Emotional Imperialism

A. Fittingness and Prioritization

The first form of emotional imperialism we will consider from colonial contexts involves projecting and enforcing norms of fittingness. To say an emotion is fitting is to say that is evaluatively accurate. For example, fear evaluates a situation as involving danger. If a person sees a threat ahead, fear accurately evaluates her situation (D'Arms and Jacobson 2000). The second involves projecting and enforcing norms of *emotional prioritization*. When two emotions are fitting, there are further norms about which emotions ought to be prioritized (Archer and Matheson 2019, 2021). For example, a serial killer might be a fitting target of anger and contempt for her actions, but also a fitting target of sympathy and pity for her terrible upbringing. Norms of emotional prioritization tell us when, and the extent to which, we ought to favor anger and contempt over sympathy and pity for the serial killer.

As noted, norms of fittingness and prioritization are a core part of an emotional regime. A notable, but underacknowledged, part of colonialism is that the colonizers often impose a new emotional regime upon the colonized. For example, in its effort to maintain control over Angola, Portugal designed, installed, and initiated a range of commemorative practices. These included a range of monuments to important Portuguese national heroes that explicitly aimed to create a collective belief in both Portugal's superiority and its benevolence. According to Jeremy Ball (2017: 78), these monuments were used to build "a historical narrative celebrating Portuguese

settlement.” These commemorative monuments function to inculcate praising emotions, such as admiration and gratitude, towards the Portuguese colonizers.² These commemorations were important for maintaining control over the native Angolan population. The aim was “to create a new, Portuguese Angolan reality” (Ball 2017: 91). According to this new reality, the Portuguese colonizers who had conquered Angola were fitting targets of admiration, gratitude, and esteem for bringing civilisation to “an uncivilised ‘blank space’” (Ball 2017: 91). These commemorations, then, can be seen as an attempt by the colonizers to impose their norms for emotional fittingness on the Angolans, in order to encourage deferential rather than antagonistic emotional responses to the colonizers.

Imperial powers also developed norms for the appropriate emotional responses to have towards the colonized. For example, Frantz Fanon (2007: 91) describes being on a train when a white child says to his mother, “Mama, see the Negro! I’m frightened!” As Fanon goes on to describe, this encounter arises from the hatred, fear, and disgust that White people feel towards Black people. In Neetu Khanna’s (2020: 7-8) reading of this scene, she argues that the affective responses of both Fanon and the White the boy follow a “visceral logic” resulting from “a deep and violent history of colonial subjugation” which constitutes a form of “affective manipulation.” In other words, there is a deep-seated emotional logic in operation in this scene, according to which Black people are to be feared. The emotional logic here is not restricted to fear. According to this logic, Black people are also fitting

² See Archer and Matheson (2021) for the claim that many commemorative practices are expressions of admiration.

objects of hatred, contempt, and disgust from white people. Black people themselves should respond to themselves with “shame and self-contempt” (Fanon 2007: 91).

These norms of fittingness were also importantly relativised according to who was having the emotion. As Ann Stoler describes,

Imperial projects called upon specific sentiments, and assessed racial membership, in part by locating appropriate carriers and recipients of those feelings. To whom one expressed attachment as opposed to pity, contempt, indifference, or disdain provided both cultural and legal “proof” of who one was, where one ranked in the colonial order of things, and thus where one racially belonged (2008: 40).

One’s position in the racial hierarchy, then, determined which emotions one was sanctioned to feel toward whom.

These norms function to maintain imperial domination in two ways. First, they justify imperial force in the mind of the colonizer: the colonized are scary, disgusting, and worthy of contempt and so need to be controlled by the civilised. In the words of Aimé Césaire (1972: 43) in his *Discourse on Colonialism*, colonialism is “based on contempt for the native and justified by that contempt.” Second, these emotional norms aim to develop a subordinate attitude in the colonized. In Césaire’s (1972: 43) words, the colonized are turned into people, “in whom fear has been cunningly instilled, who have been taught to have an inferiority complex, to tremble, kneel,

despair, and behave like flunkeys.” According to Paulo Freire (1970: 126), the success of an imperial project depends on this, as “it is essential that those invaded become convinced of their intrinsic inferiority.”

Imperial powers also imposed norms concerning how different emotional responses should be prioritized. For example, the Dutch colonial authorities in the 19th Century were concerned that Dutch colonial officials in Java and their offspring may come to love the colonial land on which they lived more than the Netherlands (Stoler 2008: Ch. 3). This worry partially motivated the decision to pass a law in 1842 declaring that senior positions in the Dutch colonial civil service were only open to those who had been educated in the Delft Academy in the Netherlands (Stoler 2008: 73). This move was deemed necessary to ensure “close ties between the motherland and colony” and to prevent colonial officials and their children from becoming “estranged [...] from the motherland” (Stoler 2008: 93). The Dutch were also concerned that Dutch children raised in Java would adopt Javanese emotional norms. The Dutch colonial minister argued that:

Raising and educating Europeans in the Indies will stand in the way of a desirable civilizing of the native and this upbringing will have the result that these [...] will lack any sense of unity with Europeans. They [will] become haughty, imperious, lazy and lascivious. (Stoler 2008: 94)

These norms for emotional prioritisation, then, played an important role in the Dutch colonial project in helping to ensure that the next generation of colonial officials would help to enforce the imperialist emotional regime.

B. Emotion Interpretation

In addition to norms for the appropriateness of emotional responses, emotional regimes also involve a set of implicit norms about how to interpret emotions.

In April 1769 the British ship *HMS Endeavor*, captained by the explorer James Cook, arrived at the Pacific Island of Tahiti. They were warmly received by the local inhabitants. Cook himself noted their “good natured and benevolent disposition” (Beaglehole 1961: 398 cited in Levy 1968: 36). One of Cook’s company, Georg Forster (1777: 133), noted the friendliness of the Tahitians, remarking upon “their gentleness, their generosity, their affectionate friendship, their tenderness, their pity” (cited in Plumper 2012: 81). Another of Cook’s crew, Joseph Banks, remarked that, “few faces have I seen which have more expression in them than those of these people” (cited in Plumper 2012: 81).

Before long, though, the explorers began to doubt the emotional sincerity of the Tahitians. On leaving the nearby island of Huahine on his second voyage to the islands, Cook reacted with surprise at the intensity of the emotional reactions of the locals to his departure:

The Chief, his wife and daughter, but especially the two latter, hardly ever ceased weeping. I will not pretend to say whether it was real or feigned grief they showed on this occasion. Perhaps it was a mixture of both; but was I to abide by my own opinion only, I should believe it was real (Beaglehole 1961: 428, cited in Levy 1973: 97).

Not everyone was as willing as Cook to grant the islanders the benefit of the doubt. William Bligh, a British navy officer who sailed to Tahiti in 1787, recounted the following experience in his log:

On my way back, I was suddenly surprised at a violent degree of distress by someone at a little distance off, where I saw a toopapaw [a corpse]. As I expressed a desire to see the distressed person, Tynah took me to the place, but we no sooner came in sight than the mourner burst into a fit of laughter at seeing me. This person was the mother of a young female child that lay dead. Several young women were with her, but they all resumed a degree of cheerfulness, and the tears were immediately dried up (cited in Levy 1973: 98).

In response to the mother's sudden change of mood, Bligh thought that: "the woman had no sorrow for her child, as her grief could not so easily have subsided if it was the case she regretted the loss of it" (cited in Levy 1973: 98).

Similarly, in the early 1800s the Reverend John Davies compiled a Tahitian and English dictionary in which, in the words of anthropologist Robert Levy, he listed 76 Tahitian terms “having to do with a separation of personal action or qualities from some inner correspondence.” Davies gave the following interpretations for some of these terms: “‘fair and deceptive, as the speech of a hypocrite,’ ‘great in appearance only,’ ‘empty sympathy,’ ‘a fair exterior and that the only good quality,’ ‘to pretend to faith or obedience in order to gain some end’” (Levy 1973: 98). Bligh also called into question the authenticity of the emotions the Tahitians expressed in their religious ceremonies:

I should have reasoned that people strongly impressed with superstitious notions or ideas would be equally affected at the same rites attending them, but it is powerfully the reverse here; laughing, ridiculous questions, and the strongest proofs of inattention in all the ceremonies I have met with, convince me to the contrary, and I do believe that *whatever their secret ceremonies are, they are followed up with very little reverential awe and with no respect* (Levy 1973: 99; emphasis added).

Similarly, Edmond de Bovis writing in the middle of the 19th Century remarked that Tahitians attending a funeral ceremony “wail in a peculiar way” but “are not particularly sad, because one sees them in leaving the dead man’s house give themselves over to their ordinary pastimes and jokes until the arrival of a new relative alerts them that it is time to begin the cries again” (cited in Levy 1973: 289).

We can see, then, that the reactions of these European explorers and missionaries to the Tahitians was mixed. The Europeans questioned the sincerity of the emotional displays from the islanders and viewed the “separation of the emotional display from the inner ‘truth’” to be “a particular problem” (Levy 1973: 98). However, Levy (1968: 39) argues that the Europeans did not attribute this insincerity to evil motivations but rather to the “childlike and unreliable” nature of the islanders.

This view of Tahitians as possessing a childlike emotional nature made them attractive targets for Christian missionaries. The London Missionary School selected Tahiti for a first field mission. One of the founders of the mission explained this decision by saying that, “no other part of the heathen world affords so promising a field for a Christian mission,” citing among other reasons, “the temper of the people” (cited in Levy 1968: 37).

The attribution of a childlike and unreliable emotional nature to the Tahitians marked them out as inferior and less developed to that of the Europeans. This view of the islanders’ emotional nature was then used to justify sending Christian missionaries to the island who would attempt to ‘civilize’ the natives. In other words, the attributed emotional deficiency was directly appealed to in the justification of religious imperialism. Indeed, within thirty years of Cook’s trip to Tahiti, Protestant missionaries had arrived from the London Missionary Society. By 1830 many Tahitians were Protestant (Levy 1973: 16). We can therefore plausibly take the imposition of norms of emotional interpretation as a form of emotional imperialism.

C. Emotion Regulation

Another form of emotional imperialism involves the imposition of norms of emotion regulation—that is, how people ought to manage their emotional life.

We can find a clear example of how enforcement of norms of emotion regulation functions as a form of emotional imperialism by returning to the example of the British explorers' interactions with Tahitians. The explorers viewed the islanders as having less control over their emotional lives than Europeans. For example, in Forster's (1777: 226) journal he noted that the European "civilized education in general tends to stifle the emotions of our heart; for as we are too often taught to be ashamed of them, we unhappily conquer them by custom." He contrasted this with: "the simple child of nature, who inhabits these islands, [who] gives free course to all his feelings, and glories in his affection towards the fellow creature." Cook also suggested that the islanders were unable to control their emotions, saying to his crew that: "the choleric emotions of the savage were to be repressed with gentleness, and prudently suffered to cool" (Forster 1777: 555). However, as Levy argues, the islanders actually possessed sophisticated methods for managing their emotional lives. According to Levy (1973: 273) the dramatic emotional displays that the explorers viewed as evidence of emotional insincerity were in fact a means by which islanders took control of their emotional lives. The aim of these displays was not to sincerely express what they were feeling but to help to stave off strong emotional responses that they would be unable to control.

The idea that the colonized are less able to control their emotional lives is, according to Kelly Oliver (2005), a key aspect of imperialism. A perceived lack of ability to regulate emotions was used to justify imperialism by supporting the idea that those being colonized were not fully human. As she writes:

Along with economic imperialism that divides the world into ‘the haves’ and ‘have nots’, colonization brings with it affective imperialism that divides the world into the civilized—those who have control over emotions—and the barbaric—those who don’t (Oliver 2005: 91).

This identification of the colonized as *barbaric* helps to illicitly justify one’s imperial project because it supports the idea that the land being occupied by imperial powers was not *really* being occupied before they arrived. This helps to support the idea that the colonizers are building on empty space and the colonized are creatures to be dealt with rather than people to be reasoned with.

A perceived lack of the ability to regulate the emotions of the colonized was used to support the idea that the colonized people are child-like people who need to be controlled by the civilized. As we have seen, this formed part of the justification for sending Christian missionaries to Tahiti. Similarly, in 1900, the viceroy of India appealed to the idea that the colonized were “less than schoolchildren” (cited in Matheson 1996: 54) to ban them from entering the colonial administration. The idea that the colonized were unable to regulate their emotions involved the colonizers imposing a view of what good emotional management looks like on the colonized. This was harmful in its own right. As Oliver argues, this is a form of “colonization of

psychic space” (Oliver 2005: 92). It also served to bolster the imperial regime. The colonized come to see themselves as inferior to the colonizers and incapable of ruling themselves. Meanwhile, the colonizers view the colonized as needing to be subjected to benevolent rule to control their unruly natures.

D. Emotion Practices

The final aspect of emotional regimes we will consider are norms about emotion practices. These practices elicit and express certain emotions. Honoring practices, for example, such as award ceremonies, may involve both an expression of admiration, gratitude, or respect towards the recipient and an attempt to *elicit* this emotion in those who do not already feel it. Funeral practices may involve the expression of grief, while large state sanctioned mourning ceremonies aim not only to express grief but also to elicit it. These practices can differ across cultures. For example, some theorists have claimed that apologies in the USA largely function to assign blame while in Japan they largely function to express remorse (Maddux et al. 2011). This points us towards another form of emotional imperialism: the imposition of one culture’s norms governing emotional practices on another.

A clear example of this occurred in China after its defeat in the Opium Wars when Jesuit missionaries were replaced by Franciscans. According to Henrietta Harrison (2010), Jesuit missionaries had allowed Chinese Catholics in the Shanxi province to include aspects of Confucianism in their worship and funeral practices. China’s defeat and the transfer of regional Catholic power from Jesuits to Franciscans led to

these aspects of Confucianism, and anything that appeared Confucian, to be banned. This included “a ban on kowtows performed in front of the coffin at funerals [...] on the grounds that these rituals, which were central to the performance of the Confucian virtue of filial piety, could be interpreted as worship of the spirits of the dead” (Harrison 2010: 520). By imposing their funeral practices on the Chinese Catholics, the Italian missionaries were dictating how grief should be ritually expressed.

The destruction of emotion practices can also constitute a form of emotional imperialism. We can find a clear example of this by returning again to the example of Tahiti. The missionary William Ellis writing in the 1820s about Tahiti before Protestantism had taken hold wrote that:

The islanders were greatly devoted to amusements: war, pagan worship, and pleasure appear to have engaged their attention and occupied the principal portion of their time. Their games were numerous and diversified and were often affairs of national importance (cited in Levy 1973: 22).

Ellis goes on to note, with satisfaction, that the arrival of the missionaries brought an end to these forms of entertainment, remarking that, “This is, on no account, matter of regret [...] we shall rather rejoice that much of the time of the adults is passed in more rational and beneficial pursuits” (cited in Levy 1973: 22-23). In other words, the destruction of the Tahitians emotion practices function to make them more productive in the eyes of the Protestant missionaries.

However, the end of these activities took a heavy toll on the life of the islanders.

Henry Adams writing about the Tahitians in 1891 commented that:

I never saw a people that seemed so hopelessly bored as the Tahitians [...] If they have amusements or pleasures, they conceal them. Neither dance nor game have I seen or heard of; nor surf-swimming nor ball playing nor anything [...] They do not even move with spirit (cited in Levy 1973: 23).

Levy (1973: 23-4) attributes this change to a “breakdown of meanings and purposes” as Tahitians “accepted the missionary doctrine that that fun, games, and amusements are for young people.” Here we have a case of Protestant missionaries imposing their norms for emotional practices on the Tahitians by putting an end to Tahitian practices that elicited joy and happiness.

As Levy (1973: 316) notes, the breakdown of these meanings had an impact on the use of the language Tahitians used to describe their emotions, with joyful words that the missionaries had translated as ‘gay’, ‘exulting’, and so on all either disappearing from the language or becoming “subdued in meaning.” Words expressing contentment, on the other hand, had become a more prominent part of the language. As Levy summarises, “the occasions producing joyful emotions were one of the things largely lost in the Christianizing and colonization of the old society,” and this was largely due to “the loss of traditional games, sports, entertainments” which “brought a great diminution in occasions for joy” (Levy 1973: 317). This shows the impact that the destruction of emotion practices can have: vastly reducing the

occasions for joy and bringing about changes to the language used to describe emotional life.

3. Rethinking Emotional Imperialism

We have outlined five forms emotional imperialism may take. Emotional imperialism may involve the imposition of norms of fittingness and prioritization, norms of emotional interpretation, norms for emotional regulation, and norms for conducting emotional practices. In our previous work, we defined emotional imperialism as “a powerful group imposing its emotional norms and standards on another less powerful group whilst at the same time marking out the other culture’s emotional norms and standards as deviant and inferior”. While this definition fits with the five forms of emotional imperialism we have discussed, we can get a richer account of the nature of emotional imperialism by drawing on philosophical analyses of the distinctive wrongs of imperialism.

Political philosophers working on the forms of injustice arising in colonial and imperial contexts have sought to explore the distinctive form of injustice involved in these political systems (see Moore 2016 for an overview).³ Our concern is not with

³ As Moore notes, this work tends to overlook what distinguishes colonialism from other forms of imperialism. According to Moore (2016: 445), colonialism is a form of imperialism that involves imperial settlers moving to the colony to impose imperial rule and with the aim of reproducing “their culture, language, and political values in the new place.” While our focus in this paper is on the forms of emotional imperialism that exist in these colonial contexts, we take our conclusions about the wrongs of emotional imperialism to apply more broadly.

establishing the distinctive wrong here but rather with articulating the paradigmatic injustices involved in imperial rule.

One central injustice of imperial rule is that it is a form of *political domination*. As Daniel Butt (2013: 893) describes, imperial rule involves, “the subjugation of one people by another.” We can understand the wrong here in terms of the more general class of wrongs involved with political formations that involve unequal and nonreciprocal forms of decision making (Ypi 2013). However, we must also keep in mind the distinctive nature of the domination. As Margaret Moore (2016: 452) explains, the form this domination takes in imperial contexts is that of “alien rule”—that is, political rule by a group external to the colonized community. This is important because it stands as a substantial barrier to members of that community affirming and identifying with the political institutions that govern their lives (Moore 2015; Stilz 2015).

Another paradigmatic wrong involved with imperialism is *cultural imposition* (Tan 2007; Butt 2013). Colonialism typically involves coercively imposing ideas, concepts, categories, practices, and ideals from another culture on the colonized (Moore 2016: 450). This is often achieved through force—for example, by banning the colonized from speaking their native language—but can also be achieved by denigrating the native culture and valorizing the culture of the colonizer.

A third paradigmatic wrong is *exploitation* (Moore 2016: 250). A clear motivation for many imperial projects was that expanding the scope of political control to new

territories created opportunities to extract natural resources and gain access to captive markets. This was exploitative, as colonizers used their imperial power to instrumentalize the colonized population by using the power they had over it to extract economic benefits from them.

The cases we discussed in the previous section gave us reason to devise a more expansive account of the nature of emotional imperialism, and these paradigmatic features of imperialism provide us with the tools necessary to complete this task. We propose that:

Emotional imperialism is a form of domination of one group by another that involves the imposition of the dominator's emotional regime (or elements of this regime) on the dominated.

This definition fits with the general concept of imperialism as the practice by which one nation extends its power and control over other nations. Emotional imperialism is how a community extends its power and control over the emotional lives of another community.⁴ A community may seek to control the emotional lives of another community by imposing emotional norms on that community, including norms of fittingness, appropriate expression, and emotion regulation.

⁴ It is worth noting that 'community' here is somewhat vague. Some might be tempted to restrict this to nation states. However, as Ypi (2013: 162 fn. 12) points out when discussing colonialism, this would prevent the emotional domination of indigenous people who lack nation states from counting as a form of emotional imperialism.

We understand domination here in line with Michael Thompson's radical republican view.⁵ According to Thompson, there are two faces of domination. *Extractive domination* is a form of power that one possesses over another which is exerted to extract benefits from that person. Extracting resources from others counts as a form of extractive dominance "when the structural relation constituting the extractive act(s) is hierarchical and the inequality of power between the agents involved is sustained by the structure of that relation" (Thompson 2017: 48). This form of dominance, then, concerns the ability of someone to direct human capacities and other resources towards benefiting oneself and away from benefitting society as a whole (Thompson 2017: 49). For example, when a wealthy family hire servants they direct the skills and labor of the servants to serve the good of the family and away from their potential to serve the community more generally.

Constitutive dominance, on the other hand, involves the power to shape norms, values, and practices in a way that helps to legitimise hierarchically structured relationships. This is a form of control over the values people have, the norms they follow, and the kinds of social relationships that they are willing to accept. It is a form dominance as it supports hierarchical social relations through socialising people into accepting structural hierarchy (Thompson 2017: 50). It can be a particularly effective form of domination as it controls people from the inside. For example, managers who can get

⁵ This differs then from more liberal republican views such as Philip Pettit (1999) according to which domination involves the capacity to arbitrarily interfere in the affairs of others.

their employees to internalise norms about punctuality and professionalism will have no need to resort to any threats or incentives to ensure their employees act as they want.

The various forms of emotional imperialism can be accommodated by these two different forms of domination. A community that controls the emotional norms of another community to maintain a hierarchical relationship over them is in a position of constitutive dominance. This will likely serve the benefits of the dominant community and allow them to extract emotional benefits from the dominated. Of course, as Thompson makes clear, these two forms of dominance are mutually reinforcing. It will certainly be very difficult to engage in extractive dominance without also being in a position of constitutive dominance. With this definition in hand, we can now explain what is wrong with emotional imperialism. These various forms of emotional imperialism involve three different kinds of wrong.

First, and most fundamentally, these various forms of emotional imperialism involve a powerful group imposing its emotion norms on a less powerful group. This is wrong for its own sake, as it involves the domination of the emotional lives of others. When two groups of people with different emotional norms meet, they may need to find some way to accommodate these differences. This may involve each group adapting their norms in some ways to accommodate the other. In some cases, it may even make most sense for one group to adapt themselves entirely to the norms of the other. This, though, is a process that should be decided together

according to norms of equality and reciprocity.⁶ For one group to simply impose its norms on the other is to violate these norms.

Second, emotional imperialism serves to bolster imperial regimes and the hierarchical relationships they have with those they control, allowing for the continued economic exploitation of the colonial territory. Norms for fittingness and prioritization serve to justify imperial force in the minds of the colonizer and to develop a subordinate attitude in the colonised. Norms for emotional interpretation and emotion regulation function to paint a picture of colonized people as emotionally immature or barbaric in comparison to the emotionally superior colonizer. This again provides support for the broader imperialist ideology the colonized are inferior, uncivilized beings to the colonizers and need to be subjected to benevolent, civilizing colonial rule for their own benefit.⁷

Finally, these various forms of emotional imperialism involve direct harms to the colonized. As critics of colonization such as Frantz Fanon (1963; 2017), Aimé Césaire (1972), and Paulo Freire (1970) have articulated in detail, the imposition of emotional norms by imperial powers creates widespread feelings of inferiority, division and alienation amongst the colonized.⁸ The emotional norms that prop up colonialism are harmful in and of themselves, in addition to the harms they cause by

⁶ Cf. Ypi (2013: 178).

⁷ For rich and detailed accounts of this ideology see Schuller 2018 and Wynter 2003.

⁸ See Whitney (2018) for a rich and detailed examination of the various forms of affective injustice that this gives rise to.

helping to sustain imperial regimes. Moreover, as psychologist Ashis Nandy (1983) argues, while the psychological domination that accompanies colonialism serves to bolster colonialism by reducing resistance towards it, these psychological impacts often outlive the removal of the colonial regime. These harmful impacts of emotional imperialism, then, can live on even when the imperial power is overthrown.

4. Rethinking Affective Injustice

We have argued that emotional imperialism is a form of domination over the emotional lives of others. Understanding emotional imperialism this way also forces us to rethink how we understand affective injustice. According to Gallegos's (2022) account, affective injustice occurs when people are unfairly deprived of the affective goods of *subjective well-being* and *emotional aptness*.

Gallegos defines subjective well-being in terms of “mood, self-esteem, and life-satisfaction” (2022: 190). One’s mood is the balance between positive and negative affective states, while self-esteem and life-satisfaction “refer to an affective evaluation of oneself and of one’s life as a whole.” A person who enjoys subjective well-being, then, will often have good moods and feel positively about herself and her life.

Gallegos claims that several subsidiary goods may be necessary for the provision of the primary good of subjective well-being—namely, affective freedoms (e.g., the freedom to pursue subjective well-being), affective resources and opportunities (e.g., an environment and lifestyle that permits subjective well-being), and affective recognition (e.g., others are responsive to one’s needs with respect to subjective well-

being). Emotional aptness, on the other hand, involves having one's emotional life being grounded in and "properly responsive to reality" (Gallegos 2022: 192). For example, a person will experience anger at injustice, feel fear at dangerous and scary things, happiness and joy at justice and the achievements of others, and so on.

According to Gallegos, emotional aptness is not just important insofar as it contributes to subjective well-being. Rather, it is important in its own right as it is important that our emotions correctly represent the world. He again takes affective freedoms, affective resources and opportunities, and affective recognition to be subsidiary goods that may be needed to obtain emotional aptness.

We agree with Gallegos that emotional aptness and subjective well-being are affective goods, the unfair deprivation of which means that one suffers an affective injustice.

However, we disagree with his claim that merely having emotional aptness and subjective well-being are sufficient for one to enjoy affective *justice*. This is because, as stated, his account of affective justice is compatible with a thorough-going imperialistic imposition of an emotional regime. It is possible in principle, though unlikely in practice, for an imperial power to enforce an emotional regime that brings about improved levels of subjective well-being and emotional aptness. As we saw in Section 2, some imperialists appealed to the idea that they were improving the emotional lives of the colonized to justify their enforcement of emotional norms.

Even if the new emotional norms were genuine improvements, though, we claim that it would still constitute an affective injustice for one community to dominate the emotional lives of another. Accepting this point creates a problem for Gallegos' account, as this raises the possibility of an affective injustice that does not involve the

deprivation of either of the affective goods that Gallegos claims to be primary.

Gallegos' account, then, appears to be incomplete. His account must therefore at least be supplemented so that it rules out emotional imperialism being compatible with affective justice. In what follows, we consider two potential solutions.

First, one might add a third primary good, such as *affective autonomy*.⁹ Since imperialists often portray colonized people as child-like, imperialism can be understood to a form of *paternalism*—that is, an interference in the lives of others justified on the grounds the other people's lives will be better off as a result. And an important worry with any form of paternalism is that it will involve a violation of autonomy. The most basic understanding of autonomy “is to govern oneself, to be directed by considerations, desires, conditions, and characteristics that are not simply imposed externally upon one” (Christman 2020). So, an autonomous person must most basically be able to make decisions and guide their own life without others *imposing* their decisions, desires, and so on. In the case of affective autonomy, this means the ability to govern one's own emotional life. At the group level, this will involve the freedom for a community to develop and maintain its own emotional regime without having this dictated to them from outside.¹⁰ This solution can explain why imposing

⁹ See Gallegos (this issue) for another suggested primary good that might also solve this problem—namely, affective authenticity. As we simply want to raise the *kinds* of solution one might take to this problem, we leave evaluating his (and our proposed solutions) for another time.

¹⁰ This raises difficult questions such as what counts as a community, and whether there can be emotional imperialism within a particular community. We set aside these questions here.

an emotional regime on another community would be wrong, even if this increased their levels of well-being and emotional aptness. It would be wrong because it would constitute an unjust deprivation of affective autonomy.

Alternatively, one might take a different approach to understanding affective injustice. On Gallegos's account, affective injustice is understood solely in terms of the deprivation of certain goods. In other words, it is understood solely as a kind of *distributive injustice*. Distributive egalitarians hold that distributive justice involves an equal distribution of certain goods, such as money, time, or land (e.g., Cohen 1989). So, on this model of affective injustice, affective justice involves an equal distribution of affective goods. According to Young (1990), however, it is a mistake to understand all forms of injustice in terms of the distributive injustice. Instead, some forms of injustice occur in the formation of norms and rules. For Young (1990: 34), a just norm is one in which "everyone who follows it must in principle have an effective voice in its consideration and be able to agree to it without coercion." Similarly, for a social condition to be just "it must enable all to meet their needs and exercise their freedom" (Young 1990: 34). When it comes to norms for emotional life, these will not normally require a process of formal deliberation. Justice would instead require that anyone who is subject to a norm is also able to influence it. Just emotional norms will not be norms that are coercively imposed on one community by another.

Rather than understand affective injustice as a distributional inequality, we might instead understand it as a kind of *relational inequality*. Relational egalitarians hold that

people ought to stand in relations of equality with each other (Anderson 1999).¹¹ So, relational egalitarians are opposed to unequal ways in which people relate to each other, such as social hierarchies in which one group of people take themselves to be superior to others, often in virtue of their membership in a particular identity group such as their gender, race, or socio-economic class. Understanding affective injustice in relational egalitarian terms means that we should seek to eliminate hierarchical relationships between people that puts some people in a position to dominate the emotional lives of others in order to achieve affective justice. One community of people should not be in a hierarchically superior position to impose their norms for emotional fittingness, prioritization, regulation, or practices on others in a way that advances the interests of the dominant. This proposal allows that the distribution of affective goods may also be important. It simply holds that we cannot properly understand affective justice or injustice without including a relational component.

Conclusion

Our primary aim in this paper has been to expand our understanding of the forms that emotional imperialism can take. We have argued that in addition to the imposition of norms of emotional fittingness and prioritization, emotional imperialism can also involve imposing norms for the appropriate expression of emotion, for how to regulate one's emotions, and how to engage in emotion practices. These new forms of emotional imperialism motivated a search for a more

¹¹ For an introduction to relational egalitarianism see Voigt (2020).

expansive definition of emotional imperialism. We drew on accounts of the wrongs of imperialism—in particular, that it involves one community dominating the lives of another community—in order to provide our more expansive definition of the concept, according to which emotional imperialism involves one community dominating the emotional lives of another.

We also argued that this new understanding of emotional imperialism creates a problem for Gallegos' account of affective injustice as the deprivation of the primary affective goods of subjective well-being and emotional aptness. We proposed two potential solutions, including the suggestion that affective justice requires relational emotional equality. On this proposal, affective justice cannot exist in a world in which one group of people use their superior hierarchical position to control the emotional lives of others to promote the interests of the powerful.

Our discussion raises several important questions. First, how do the forms of emotional imperialism we have outlined operate in today's (mostly) postcolonial context? Future work should explore the ways in which the imposition of emotional norms of emotional fittingness, prioritization, regulation, and practices operate in the contemporary world.

Second, what should people do to try and ensure that they avoid perpetuating emotional imperialism? This issue is obviously important for those in positions of power and privilege. However, even those who do not obviously enjoy such

privileges should be wary about the possibility of stepping into the shoes of the oppressor.

Finally, given our account, how ought people to resist emotional imperialism? One important problem raised by constitutive domination is that people are dominated from the inside—their values, norms and ways of life serve the interests of those in positions of hierarchical power. Resisting this form of emotional imperialism then may require people detaching themselves from these norms and values and to develop new ways of relating to the world. As the Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand claimed in 1935, resisting British imperialism required just this form of inner transformation, so Indian people must “feel new feelings: and “learn to be aware with a new awareness” (1935: 153, cited in Khanna 2020: 60).¹²

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¹² Thanks to audiences at the European-American Online Workshop in Philosophy of Emotions, Tilburg University, The 9th Annual Conference of the European Philosophical Society for the Study of Emotions at the University of Graz and the Wake Forest University Philosophical Workshop on Affective Injustice for helpful feedback. Thanks also to Frederik Westerlund for written comments on an early draft of the paper. Special thanks to Francisco Gallegos and Lori Gallegos for organizing such a wonderful workshop at Wake Forest and for all of their helpful feedback on the paper. Benjamin Matheson’s work on this paper was supported by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) under contract number M822.00083.

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